A Sage Par Excellence

Biography of Jagadguru Shankaracharya
Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati
Mahaswamiji,
the 33rd Acharya of Dakshinamnaya
Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri

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Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamsthanam
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Preface

Twelve centuries back, *Jagadguru* Sri Adi Shankaracharya established His first and foremost *Peetham*, the Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham for the sustenance and propagation of *Sanatana-Dharma*. Since then, the *Peetham* has been adorned by an unbroken chain of *Acharyas* who have been erudite scholars and dispassionate saints. Out of their innate compassion, the *Jagadgurus* have been incessantly teaching the path of *Dharma* to the multitude of Their disciples, through Their very lives, Their teachings and by the establishment of temples, *Pathashalas* and other charitable institutions.

The 33rd *Acharya* of the *Peetham*, *Jagadguru* Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* was a great *yogi*, a repository of *Shastraic* knowledge, an expert in *Mantra-Shastra* and an epitome of compassion. A life sketch of the *Mahaswamiji* was first published in Kannada by the Peetham in 1924. It was penned by *GuruSevaPraveena* Sri Srikantha Shastri, the then *Sarvadhikari* (agent) of the Math who had the fortune of serving the *Mahaswamiji* for many years. It is

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this work that forms the primary source of this book. While compiling this book, excerpts from an abridged English translation, of the Tamil version of the aforesaid Kannada book, by Sri B V Kameshwara Iyer, titled "The life of Sri Jagadguru Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swami of Sringeri" have been included.

One is able to see several striking similarities between the great master, the *Jagadguru* Sri Adi Shankaracharya and the *Mahaswamiji* when one reads about their respective lives and accomplishments. No wonder, the *Mahaswamiji* was extolled as '***Abhinava Shankara***', a reincarnation of the great master Sri Adi Shankaracharya.

It was the *Mahaswamiji* who rediscovered the birthplace of Sri Adi Shankaracharya at Kalady. Ever since the rediscovery, a perennial stream of spiritual influence stemming from Kalady has been flowing and flooding our land. If India and the world today celebrate *Shankara-Jayanti* commemorating the birth of Sri Adi Shankaracharya, it is solely due to the *Mahaswamiji* who instituted this celebration way back in the late 19th century. It is again due to the *Mahaswamiji's* efforts that

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we have with us the complete works of Sri Adi Shankaracharya.

This book also contains a brief life sketch of the *Mahaswamiji's* Guru, Jagadguru Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* (32nd *Acharya* of the *Peetham*) in the beginning. It was this revered *Acharya* who initiated the *Mahaswamiji* into *Sannyasa* at a tender age of 8, and groomed Him.

This book also comprises a section in which the hymn '***Gurudvaya Abheda Anusandhanam***' composed by the present *Acharya* of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, *Jagadguru* Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha *Mahaswamiji* has been presented. The hymn beautifully portrays the non-difference between Sri Adi Shankaracharya and Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*.

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It is very apt that this book is getting released on the special occasion of the Centenary Celebrations (23rd May 2010) of the rediscovery of Kalady and the *Kumbhabhishekam* of the temples of Adi Shankaracharya and Goddess Sharadamba. Thanks to each one of the team members of Shankara Advaita Research Centre, Sringeri, who had worked in the publication of the

book; special thanks to a disciple for his tireless efforts while editing the contents of this book.

We offer our humblest *pranams* to *Jagadguru* Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha *Mahaswamiji*, whose blessings, inspiration and guidance has made this work possible. We are sure that the life of the *Mahaswamiji* will serve as an inspiration to all the devotees to tread the path of dharma and achieve higher good.

श्रीसच्चिदानन्दशिवाभिनव्य नृसिंहभारत्यभिधान् यतीन्द्रान् ।
विद्यानिधीन् मन्त्रनिधीन् सदात्मनिष्ठान् भजे मानवशम्भुरूपान् ॥

"I worship Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Mahaswamiji, the king of ascetics, a repository of knowledge, a treasure-house of mantras, who is ever immersed in the Self and who is none other than the Lord Shiva human form."

12-05-2010
Kalady

GurusevaDhurina, Padmasri
Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar
CEO & Administrator
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Sringeri.

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1. Parentage and Early Life

More than a century ago, there was a pious and orthodox Telugu Brahmin, named Yajnanarayana Shastri, who lived in a village called Yedatore on the banks of the Cauvery. He was of *Kashyapa-gotra*, his *sutra* was *Apastamba* and he belonged to the *mulaka-nadu* sect.

It has been enjoined in the *Manusmriti*:

अधीत्य विधिवद्वेदान् पुत्रांश्चोत्पाद्य धर्मतः ।
इष्ट्वा च शक्तितो यज्ञैर्मनो मोक्षे निवेशयत् ॥

(Having learnt the *Vedas* as prescribed (in the *Shastras*), begotten progeny in a *Dharmic (*righteous) manner, offered oblations to one's capacity by means of *Yajnas* (sacrifices), should one engage one's mind in the pursuit of *Moksha* (liberation).)

In accordance with the dictates of scriptural passages such as this, Yajnanarayana Shastri first studied the *Krishna-Yajurveda*, his own *Vedic-shakha*, according to the rules of discipline prescribed for *Brahmacharya*; married in due time and settled as a householder, observing the rules of hospitality and worshipping the Gods in sacrifice; begot children for the perpetration of his family, as in duty bound; and when he turned sixty, he set his heart on the means of liberation from the trammels of *Samsara* (the cycle

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of births and deaths). Desirous of striving for liberation, he first went to a *Sandhyamantapa* close to Argyapushkarani on the banks of the Cauvery, a few miles away from his native village and spent some time alone there – away from his wife and children – to test for himself, how far he could resist the temptations of home surroundings and, when he found that the ties of family and property had no hold over him, he betook himself to a place far removed from his village – Cheranmadevi, in Tirunelveli District which was then a small and beautiful colony of Brahmins performing *Agnihotra* (daily fire sacrifice). He spent some time there, again testing the strength of his determination, and then he assumed *Sannyasa*. No one in his house knew of his stay at Cheranmadevi or *sannyasa* during his life-time.

It was only after his death that they came to know of the circumstances in which he assumed *sannyasa* from a letter written by some of the inhabitants of Cheranmadevi, as per his wish at the time of his leaving his mortal coil. The relatives then performed the ceremonies in Yedatore in the manner prescribed in the scriptures.

In the line of this *mula-purusha* (ancestor) was born Narasimha Shastri, who was the first to leave the village, Yedatore, and seek his fortune in the Court of the Maharaja of Mysore. He settled with his family in the old *Agrahara* (a locality) of Mysore town. He had two sons and, according to the custom of the family, the elder son was named as Narasimha Shastri; the younger one was named Rama Shastri. While Narasimha Shastri studied the *Vedas* as also

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the *Kavyas* and *Alankara*, Rama Shastri took to the study of the *Vedas*, the *Kavyas* and went on to study *Nyaya*, Indian dialectics, under his father. After his father's death, he continued his *Nyaya* studies under Tirupati Srinivasacharya, then a pundit renowned for his skill in *Tarka-Shastra*. He then went through a course of Sri Shankaracharya's *Bhashyas (*commentaries) and became a laureate among the court-pundits. He became widely known as Kunigal Rama Shastri. His name and fame for scholarship spread throughout South India and hundreds of students from the farthest corners of South India flocked to him for instruction, especially in the *Nyaya-Shastra*. The students who returned to their homes after finishing their course of studies under him became profound scholars. He wrote a very erudite work on *Nyaya-Shastra*, named *Shatakoti*, which has been held in high esteem by the renowned pundits in *Nyaya*.

His great erudition was only equalled by his piety. His belief in the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* was extraordinary. His faith and worship of Shiva was innate. The purity of the great pundit's life was unquestionable. This great scholar was patronized by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III and, like his father, had earned a permanent place in the heart of His Highness and was one of the most distinguished among the learned men of his court.

Rama Shastri's wife, the virtuous Lakshmamma, was devoted to the service of her husband. He and his wife, a model of chastity, love and obedience, observed fasts and

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vigils, worshipping Lord Sri Medha-Dakshinamurti, a form of Paramashiva and praying for long-living children; and in the thirty fourth year of his age, on the thirteenth day of *Vaishakha* in the year *Sarvari* (1840-41 C.E.), a son was born to him. It was a festive day in honour of God Narasimha — *Narasimha-Jayanti*. Both for this reason and following the family precedent of naming the first son after their tutelary deity Narasimha, the newborn infant was named Lakshminarasimha. Rama Shastri and his wife were then living in Nanjangud on the banks of the Kapila, performing daily worship to God Srikantheshwara. Another son was born to the couple in the month *Vaishakha* of the year *Paraabhava* when they were living in Kanchi (Kanchipuram) in Southern India. This child was named Yagnanarayana Shastri after a very early ancestor of his family referred to in the beginning of this chapter. Sometime after this, Rama Shastri became the father of a daughter.

In her fiftieth year, Lakshmamma, wife of Kunigal Rama Shastri, was again in the family way. This time, the Shastri devoutly wished and prayed for a son; he performed the *Pumsavana* rite, a ceremony which is usually performed only during the first pregnancy of a woman. *'Pumsavana'* means a rite for the birth of a male child. Traditionally Hindus wish for a male child as their firstborn, for he alone could continue their line; the ceremonies to be performed by him in honour of his ancestors, have power to rescue them from the unblessed abodes, which their sinful deeds, while on

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earth, might have been assigned to them after death. A Brahmin, the scriptures say, is born with three debts to discharge:

जायमानो ह वै ब्राह्मणस्त्रिभिर्ऋणैः ऋणवान् जायते । ब्रह्मचर्येण ऋषिभ्यो, यज्ञेन देवेभ्यः, प्रजया पितृभ्यः ।

The debt to the *Rishis*, the seers of the *Vedic* Mantras, is to be discharged by Brahmacharya – through study of the *Veda* under a qualified teacher, observing the rules of discipline prescribed for a student; that due to the Gods is to be discharged by due worship of the Gods and that to the *Pitrus* or ancestors is cleared by marrying after completion of studentship and begetting (male) children. Sage Apastamba says that the rite called *Pumsavana* ensures the birth of a male child.[1]

Kunigal Rama Shastri had a number of students under him and among them the most devoted, hence the most favoured, was one Subrahmanya Shastri, who had come to him from the *chola-desha*[2]. During the time of his wife's pregnancy, Rama Shastri had set out with one or two of his pupils to pay a visit to Lord Srikantheshwara in Nanjangud.

On his way, a thought came to him about the name he should choose for his son about to be born. He thought

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[1] पुमांसं जनयति । *Grihya Sutra* VI - 12

[2] Chola-desha – The land came to be known so because it belonged to Chola kingdom. Presently, it is a part of the state of Tamilnadu.

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within himself, “My two boys already born have not been given the name of Dakshinamurthy, even though they were the fruit of His grace. I must certainly give to the son about to be born one of the names of Paramashiva”. Rama Shastri then asked Subrahmanya: "What name shall I give to the child about to be born? I should prefer one of the names of Paramashiva, whom I am daily worshipping.” The pupil kept quiet.

The teacher pressed him for a reply; Subrahmanya said respectfully: “Sire, the child is yet to be born; whether it is going to be a male or a female child, God alone knows. Do you not think that it is a little premature, just now, to cast about for a name for a child still in the womb?” The teacher grew impatient at his reply and said, "Fie on your faith in the *Veda*. Don't you know that I have performed the *Pumsavana* rite for the child in the womb as a special case this time, and that the *Shastras* say that the rite, if performed with faith and in the prescribed form, is sure to result in the birth of a male child?" The rebuke went home; the student felt how far below he was to his teacher in implicit, unquestioned faith in the *Shastras*. He humbly replied: “Master, it is quite possible that Paramashiva, the object of your worship may himself be born in answer to your prayers. It would therefore be highly appropriate to name the child `Shivaswami’ (a name in vogue in the *Chola-desha*)”. The teacher was satisfied with the choice of name and resolved to give that name to the child on the *nama-karana* (naming ceremony) day, generally, the eleventh day after birth.

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A son was born, in justification of his faith, in the year, *Pingala* S.S 1781 (*Shalivahana Shaka*) (11th March 1858 C.E), Thursday, *Phalguna*, *Krishna-paksha*, *Ekadashi*. It was just 9.00 P.M. and the hour-gun boomed at his birth, which was considered a very happy augury. Kunigal Rama Shastri, elated with joy, went to the big lake in the city for the necessary ablutions, plunged into the water, jumping from a great height, so that huge sprays of water rose up high and fell down all-round. As per the *Shastras* this way of splashing the water is good for the salvation of one's departed ancestors.

Shivaswami, so the baby was named, grew up a winsome child. He delighted his parents by his childish sports, which consisted in smearing his fair limbs with the ashes of his father's *Aupasana* (a daily ritual for householders) hearth, clapping his hands and dancing and lisping words of divine praise, in imitation of his father when he performed his daily S*hiva-Puja*. However, Rama Shastri did not live long to enjoy the company of his illustrious son. Destiny was such that before Shivaswami completed two years, on the fourth day of the bright half of *Magha* in *Siddharthi*, he lost his father.

Lakshminarasimha Shastri, the eldest son of Kunigal Rama Shastri, was then nineteen years old. He took upon himself the management of his family after his father's death and protected his mother and brothers and conducted himself in a manner worthy of the dignity and status of his distinguished father. He had studied Sanskrit,

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Kavya, *Nataka* and *Alankara* as well as *Tarka* under his father.

As Lakshminarasimha Shastri in his childhood was frequently afflicted with ill health, his father was not anxious to press forward his studies. Being aware of his delicate health, Rama Shastri never set him severe tasks in lessons as he did with the rest of his pupils. But due to *Ishwara*'s grace and as a result of his training in past births, his intelligence was exceptional. He was often instructing his father's pupils and his own classmates as well as others independently by himself; and though his own studies were somewhat limited, his proficiency in *Tarka* was of a high order partly on account of his habit of instructing his classmates and partly by his natural force of intellect. Once when Lakshminarasimha Shastri was sixteen years of age, his father happened to be away from Mysore, travelling in South India. Some learned men from Southern India came to Mysore to take part in learned disputations at the royal court and win rewards. Lakshminarasimha Shastri heard that His Highness, the Maharaja, was anxious as to who in Mysore could hold disputations with the foreign pundits and so, attended the court.

As he was so young, he was not noticed either by the Maharaja or by the assembly of *Vidwans*. When the disputations began, the young Shastri pressed forward and began to take part in the discussions. When the discussions were concluded, both the foreign *Vidwans* who found it hard to meet the arguments of Lakshminarasimha Shastri

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and the court *Vidwans* were astonished at the young Shastri's erudition and superb articulation. The joy of the Maharaja knew no bounds and the prestige of the court had been upheld so unexpectedly. The ability of the young Shastri was highly commended and he was presented with two gold bangles, a necklace of pearls and other honours even before the foreign pundits were given their rewards.

After his father's death, Lakshminarasimha Shastri perfected himself in all the *Shastras* that he had learnt and set out on a travel. He seems to have visited Travancore; it is said that many famous *Vidwans* of that place were struck with astonishment at his ability in the disputations. Like his father, he taught *Tarka* to a great many students. He was one of the foremost among the learned men of the Mysore court during the later part of the reign of Krishna Raja Wodeyar III and for a few years during the reign of His Highness Chamarajendra Wodeyar.

As Lakshminarasimha Shastri grew older, his fame as a scholar spread even wider. His father's celebrated work on Logic, *Shatakoti*, was criticized by some scholars who aspired to become renowned by attacking so famous a work. Having heard that *Shatakoti* had been criticized adversely by some pundits, he obtained a copy of the criticism and wrote a powerful defence of that work under the name *Shatakoti-mandana*. He also wrote a very learned gloss, '*Nyayenduashekhara*' on the *Brahmanandiya*, a famous text of *Advaita-Vedanta* in which he met the

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criticisms launched by *Vishistadwaitins*, though unfortunately he did not live to complete it.

A commentary on *Samanya-nirukti*, a logical work, found its way from Bengal and became known to Mysore Vidwans. The manuscript abounded with errors and none but a master could find out the correct reading. Naturally, the scholars found it difficult to comprehend the commentary. Lakshminarasimha Shastri sent for the work, carefully examined it from end to end, corrected all its mistakes and made the work known to the outside world by teaching it independently to his pupils. This story was narrated by Gopichettipalayam Ramaswami Shastri who was a pupil of Lakshminarasimha Shastri and who held recently for a time[1], the place of Pundit in *Advaita Vedanta Shastra* in the Sanskrit College, Mysore. From these facts, we come to know that Lakshminarasimha Shastri was a scholar of a powerful and versatile intellect.

The subject of this biography, Shivaswami, who later became Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*, after he ascended the throne of transcendental wisdom, the *Peetham* of the *Sringeri Sharada Peetham*, acquired his proficiency in *Tarka* and *Vedanta* at the hands of Lakshmi Narasimha Shastri. Shivaswami lost his mother in his fifth year. Thereafter he came under the sole guardianship of his elder brother.

[1] During the time of writing the biography in 1924

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2. Sannyasa and Tutelage

Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada *Peetham* at Sringeri is the first and foremost of the four Peethams established by the renowned 8th century philosopher saint Sri Adi Shankaracharya, the principal exponent of *Advaita* (non-dualism) *Vedanta*. The Divinity of Knowledge, Goddess Sri Sharada, installed at Sringeri by Sri Adi Shankaracharya graces the *Peetham* as the presiding deity. The *Peetham* has been adorned by illustrious and unbroken lineage of *Acharyas* since Sri Sureshvaracharya, primary disciple of Sri Adi Shankaracharya. The *Acharyas* of the *Peetham* uphold the activities of the *Peetham* towards the propagation and sustenance of *Sanatana-Dharma* while pervading the lives of many thousands of disciples as their spiritual guide.

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During the greater part of the nineteenth century, the *Peetham* was presided over by Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* as its 32nd Pontiff. He was a native of Sringeri. He was born in 1798 C.E. His adventurous spirit is shown by his having completed the pilgrimage to Benares twice on foot before he was twenty years old. People of the present day who can do the pilgrimage in a few days or a few hours by a train or by flight cannot realise what untold hardships

had to be endured in those days; a pilgrim returned safe from Benares was hailed with ecstatic joy, almost as if he had returned from 'the bourne from which no traveller returns!

In 1817 C.E., the 31st *Jagadguru* Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati *Mahaswamiji*, conscious of his approaching day for disembodiment (*Videhakaivalya*) initiated the returned pilgrim as *Jagadguru* Sri Narasimha Bharati and ordained him as his successor to the Peetham. On the sixth day after this, the 31st *Jagadguru* left the mortal body and the youthful initiate ascended the *Yoga-Peetham*. He had hardly enough time to acquire scholarship; he could scarcely get acquainted with the barest outlines of the administration of the Peetham. But the young Swamiji set to work with a will. Undaunted by the heavy odds, he soon mastered the details of the administrative machinery. To secure proficiency in the several branches of learning, he invited eminent pundits from outside and always kept them by his side, so that the atmosphere about him was redolent of culture and learning; and he, himself, became a great scholar worthy of the traditions of the exalted Peetham.

All this took years of strenuous work; but he never spared himself. Once he made up his mind, he allowed nothing to stand in his way. He could never be swayed from his purpose. His will was indomitable; his firmness of character, rarely exampled. A great scholar he wanted to be, and he became one. The affairs of the Math were not

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satisfactory when he ascended the Peetham. He wanted to set matters right and in a few years, he brought everything to order, by paying personal attention to every detail of administration. He wanted to acquire psychical powers by concentration of will and he became a great *yogi* through intense meditation and perseverance. He conquered sleep and spent twenty out of the twenty-four hours of the day in divine service (*Puja*) and practice of *Mantra* and *Yoga*.

To cite an instance: In 1858 C.E., the *Mahaswamiji* was halting at Bangalore, in the Maharaja's choultry. The State of Mysore was then in charge of a British Chief Commissioner, Col. Bowring. The Chief Commissioner wished to see for himself whether all that was represented of the *Mahaswamiji* was true. Accordingly, he went one night, incognito, to the residence of the *Mahaswamiji* at about 1 A.M. and asked the sentinels at the gate what the *Mahaswamiji* was doing. He was told that the *Mahaswamiji* was then engaged in divine service. The Commissioner requested the attendant to draw up the curtain behind which the *Mahaswamiji* was seated. They did so and he saw the *Mahaswamiji* from a distance with his head bent down and offering flowers to the deity, oblivious of his surroundings. The Chief Commissioner took off his hat in reverence and returned with the conviction that the *Mahaswamiji* was indeed a holy personage. Some of his letters to the *Mahaswamiji* attest to the sincere esteem he had for the sage.

When he was barely forty years of age, the

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Mahaswamiji gave up his normal food, subsisting merely on the bitter fruits of *Momordica charantia* (bitter gourd) for the rest of his life. He never showed any impatience with anything that displeased him but quietly set to work and never stopped until it was corrected. This Guru possessed an inborn felicity to turn the people towards righteous path by his powerful speech and profound silence. The then Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar, pithily gave expression to this characteristic feature of the *Mahaswamiji* in the *'Ashtottara-shata-namavali'* which he composed in honour of the *Mahaswamiji*, who is called here *'Pratijnataartha-Sadhaka'*, the accomplisher of whatever he once decides upon.

After acquiring scholarship and *Mantrasiddhi*, *Yogic* power, and after restoring order in the affairs of the Peetham, he resolved to go on tours throughout India, propagate the *Sanatana-Dharma* and from the contributions received during such tours make the Math as prosperous to handle the *Dharmic* activities as it was in the days when the Emperors of Vijayanagar lavished their munificence on the Math.

It is ascertained from the collection of wills, bequests and other records of his lifetime that famous rulers like the Peshwas of Poona, the Holkars of Indore, the Scindias of Gwalior, the Gaekwads of Baroda and the Maharajas of Mysore and Travancore, besides a number of Chiefs, Zamindars and Jagirdars were devotedly attached to him and showed their reverence to him in many ways and that

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the Nizam of Hyderabad had great regard for him and was anxious to comply with his wishes in every aspect, as well as be helpful to him.

He visited the important native States in Northern India. He was received everywhere with respect. Wealthy rulers waited upon him with love and reverence and loaded him with wealth and precious jewels, attracted by his magnetic personality. Nobles and Jagirdars were no less behind the great rulers. All the wealth that he thus earned, all the valuable jewels, went to replenish the coffers of the Math.

Telugu was his mother-tongue; Kannada was the language of his native place; Tamil was that of the surrounding districts; Marathi and Hindustani, he acquired during his Northern trip. All these languages he spoke as if each one was his mother-tongue. It is needless to add here his proficiency in Sanskrit among his linguistic accomplishments. Visitors were no less impressed by the naturalness of tone and accent, when he spoke to them in their respective tongues than by the easy flow of his speech and elegance of expression.

He spent over forty years in his trips. His retinue was large, wherever he went; his paraphernalia were suited to his rank, for he would not stint an iota of the dignity of his office, where the prestige of the *Peetham* he presided over was concerned. It was a huge camp that went with him, horses and elephants, cows with their frisking calves, servants and sepoys and horsemen and provisions for them

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in store, sufficient for months together and refilled from time to time. Inconveniences never daunted him. His own personal wants were very few; but he saw to it that those who followed him never felt any of the privations of travel. Once in the course of his northern tour, he came to Nagpur, somewhere in the forties of the nineteenth century. It was then being ruled by the last of the Bhonsles. During the minority of the ruler, a huge treasure had accumulated. When he attained his majority in 1830 C.E., he disclosed distaste for business and plunged in dissolute ways.

When the *Mahaswamiji* reached Nagpur, the Raja did not care to receive him in the manner suited to his dignity or show him the respects, which had been established by precedent. Though the *Mahaswamiji* had little regard for personal show he could not brook any affront to the dignity of the Peetham. He therefore, immediately left for Kamthi, a British Military station nine miles off and stayed there for two whole years.

As time passed, the Raja started experiencing various kinds of difficulties including bodily ailments. He soon realised that it was all due to the way in which he had behaved towards the holy *yogi*. He immediately went to see the *Mahaswamiji* at Kamthi and paid his respects in a proper manner and took him in procession in a grand style, himself walking all the way by the side of the *Mahaswamiji*'s ivory palanquin. The *Mahaswamiji* blessed the Raja, now a reformed soul, and soon after left the Raja's capital.

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In 1838 C.E., the *Mahaswamiji* went on a tour to Rameshwaram and halted in the third corridor of the great temple of Lord Ramanatha Swamy. There are several wells round the inner shrine, the chief of which is known as the *koti-tirtha*. It is customary for pilgrims to bathe in the water taken out of these wells and conclude the ablutions by having a bath from the water of the *koti-tirtha*, to carry to their places a vessel filled with the water of the *tirtha*, duly packed and sealed, to offer worship in their homes and conclude with the rituals prescribed in the scriptures. On sacred occasions, a little of this water from the vessel used to be taken out and mixed with the water required for ablutions, so as to purify the whole.

A certain class of priests, calling themselves *'Aryas'* had constituted themselves as custodians of the *koti-tirtha*, held it under lock and key, levied a small fee on all who came to bathe in the water of the well and themselves took a vessel of water from the well and gave it to the pilgrims who came for the bath. The *Mahaswamiji* wished that his own attendants should take the water for his ablutions, direct from the well. This, the *Arya-brahmins* would not allow. They were the custodians and would not permit others to take water out of the well.

The *Mahaswamiji* wanted to correct their arrogant attitude that the holy *tirtha* was just their personal possession. He went to another well to the south of the inner shrine, known as *Sarva-tirtha* and concluded his ablutions with the water from this well and said to the

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people assembled there, that henceforth, it would be enough for pilgrims to conclude their baths with the water of *Sarva-tirtha*. From this time forwards, the *koti-tirtha* was forsaken by pilgrims; even those who had till then accepted the priestly services of *Arya-brahmins* discontinued their services. Thus, left to themselves severely alone, the *Arya-brahmins* were deprived of their emoluments and reduced to great straits. The well, *koti-tirtha*, became filthy and insanitary for want of use. In 1872 C.E., the *Mahaswamiji* came to Madurai. There the *Arya-brahmins* from Rameshwaram came to him as a representative body and implored him to forgive them for their insolence and place them within reach of their means of subsistence. Accordingly, the *Mahaswamiji* went to Rameshwaram in 1873 C.E., caused the *koti-tirtha* to be drained and pouring sanctified water into the well from his pitcher declared that the *koti-tirtha* had now become purified and the crowning act of the pilgrims should be a bath with the water of the well. From that time onwards, the *koti-tirtha* has been restored to its original position.

During this tour, another instance of a similar nature occurred at Madurai. The *Mahaswamiji*, with his young disciple, was put-up in the *Kalyana-Mantapa* of the famous temple of Meenakshi. The young *Mahaswamiji* wanted, one day, to enter the innermost shrine and offer *Puja* to the deity. The officiating priests of the temple, however, disregarded propriety and impeded his entry. Thus prevented by the priests, '*Bhattars*' as they were called, the young *Mahaswamiji* left the inner shrine, but the matter

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was reported to the Guru *Mahaswamiji* by the attendants. The Guru went to the temple one day and ordered two coconuts to be brought and by pronouncing certain mantras, transferred the *Shakti* of the Goddess to the coconuts and declared, to the thousands assembled at the spot, that he was taking the Goddess to the Math in the coconuts and that it would be sufficient for the devotees who came to worship in the temple, to offer coconuts, fruits and flowers by themselves and wave the camphor-light at the threshold before the altar. The late Dr. S.Subrahmanya Iyer, who afterwards became a judge of the High Court of Madras and officiated as Chief Justice for some time, was then the leader of the Bar in the Madurai District Court and he was the first to obey the order of the *Mahaswamiji*. His example was followed by hundreds of worshippers who visited the temple daily. The *Bhattars* were deprived of the income they derived from the divine service they used to offer on behalf of visitors. After months of privation and suffering, they came to their senses and approached Subrahmanya Iyer, and his uncle, Shankara Iyer, who then wielded the greatest possible influence throughout the district and begged them both to intercede for them with the *Mahaswamiji* and induce him to revoke the order he had issued. The *Mahaswamiji*, who was sojourning in the district, came once more to Madurai at their request and after transferring back the *Shakti*, declared that henceforth people might dedicate their offerings in the customary way.

Another protracted northern tour of *Mahaswamiji* started when he started feeling that the Maharaja of

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Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar, was indifferent towards the Peetham. Meanwhile, not being informed about the whereabouts of the *Mahaswamiji*'s tour for years together, the Maharaja came to feel that he should not be indifferent any longer to the Sringeri Peetham, to which was mainly due all the prosperity of the State. He wrote to the *Mahaswamiji* repeatedly praying that he should come back to his province and bless him. Observing the change of mindset in the Maharaja from his repeated letters with prayers, the *Mahaswamiji* returned to Mysore.

The *Mahaswamiji* made use of the contributions from rulers of the great Northern States and from Jagirdars and noblemen, by procuring gold vessels and costly jewels set with precious stones, for the use of the Math and ornaments to the deities worshipped there; he granted endowments of rent-free land to pundits whom he caused to be settled at Sringeri and the surplus was spent in increasing the resources of the Sringeri jagir.

His subsequent tours were prompted by his desire to propagate the *Sanatana-Dharma* to his disciples throughout the land. The object for which the *Peetham* had been established by Sri Shankaracharya was that it should be one of the centres from which should radiate throughout the country spiritual light and faith in the *Vaidika-marga* (*Vedic* path) and steady adherence by all to the duties of the several *Varnas* (classes) and *Ashramas* (stages of life), as prescribed in the *Shastras*. This mission he executed wherever he went, preaching to the people in their

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vernaculars, in words that went home to them.

It has been already stated that he had acquired psychical powers through *tapas*, concentration of will. An example may here be given. A certain wealthy gentleman had constructed a palatial mansion at great cost. In course of time, a rumour spread around that it was haunted; that strange noises were heard in the building when darkness set in and that strange events occurred. It had thus become unfit for habitation. The *Mahaswamiji* proposed to visit this village in the course of his tour and a *Srimukha* (an order communicating the date of his arrival) was sent to the village. Preparations were made on a grand scale for the reception of the Guru and at the request of the owner of the big mansion it was resolved by the villagers to accommodate the *Mahaswamiji* in that mansion during his stay there, as the villagers believed that the stay of the *Mahaswamiji* in that house would free it from the haunting ghost and save it from the evil repute; and so it did.

One night, while the *Mahaswamiji* was engaged in intense meditation and *Puja*, an apparition, dressed like an attendant of the *Mahaswamiji* stood before him, and when the *Mahaswamiji* understood what it was, he threw some water over it and, at once, it ran yelling from the place and fell into the well at the backyard. The people rose in alarm and searched the well; but nothing was to be seen except the clothes of the attendant. They then came and prostrated themselves before the Guru and related to him the previous story about the house. In reply, the *Mahaswamiji* smiled

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and said that henceforth, there would be no trouble from ghosts in that house and the owner might safely reside there with his family. The above incident was related by the *Mahaswamiji* himself to his successor.

As the *Mahaswamiji* was fully aware of the inconveniences endured by him after the demise of his Guru only six days after his own assumption of *sannyasa*, he became anxious soon after reaching his sixtieth year to adopt a worthy disciple while he was himself in vigorous health, to conduct the education of his pupil in the proper manner, to make him well-acquainted with the practice of *sannyasa* and the methods of the administration of the Math and to make him in every way worthy of his exalted position. This anxiety increased from day to day and he was constantly obtaining and examining the horoscopes of eligible youths in Sringeri and elsewhere and also making enquiries for eligible horoscopes through His Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. Eight years were spent in these deliberations. No horoscope that had been examined till then was found to be satisfactory.

Then, one night, while the *Mahaswamiji* was worshipping God alone, he saw the figure of a married lady standing before him and heard it say to him, "Make room". Then to his astonishment, the figure vanished. He considered it as a voice from the heavens and began to divine the meaning of it. He interpreted it to mean that he should leave Sringeri for the purpose of selecting a successor. It was not easy for him at that time to make all

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necessary arrangements and to leave the place at a moment's notice.

Nevertheless, the very next day, he visited the temple of Sri Sharada and worshipped the Goddess with great devotion and having prayed to the deity, left Sringeri on foot and came to Sacchidanandapura, which is just one mile outside Sringeri. He halted there for some days and having made all necessary arrangements travelled onwards and reached Mysore.

It is to be noted here that the thought of adopting a disciple first occurred to Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* when he was sixty years old in the year *Pingala* (1858 C.E) the very year Shivaswami, the third son of Kunigal Rama Shastri was born in Mysore. Though there is no means of knowing whether the *Mahaswamiji* was aware of this coincidence, it is a fact that as soon as he reached Mysore, the *Mahaswamiji*, after seeing the Maharaja and acquainting him with the object of his journey, sent for Lakshminarasimha Shastri, the eldest son of Kunigal Rama Shastri through the Maharaja, and also made him bring Shivaswami, who was under his protection. From this circumstance, it would seem as if the *Mahaswamiji* had somehow made up his mind at the time of setting out from Sringeri or even before it that Shivaswami and no other lad was eligible for the place of his successor.

The *Mahaswamiji* saw the eight year old lad who had accompanied his eldest brother and graciously asked him,

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"Is there anything that I could do for you, my sweet child?" to which came the unhesitating reply in a Sanskrit verse:

अयं दानकालस्त्वहं दानपात्रं
भवानेव दाता त्वदन्यं न याचे ।
भवद्भक्तिमेव स्थिरां देहि मह्यं
कृपाशील शम्भो कृतार्थोऽस्मि तस्मात् ॥

(The time is now ripe for the gift. I am the recipient and You the giver. None else shall I ask. Vouchsafe unto me steadfast devotion unto You. O Shambho, full of mercy! I am thereby blessed.)

This was a prayer to Shiva, peculiarly appropriate to the occasion and in harmony with the *Upanishadic* doctrine that the Guru was God Himself in human form. The boy wanted nothing but steadfast devotion to the Guru. It is impossible to describe the delight of the *Mahaswamiji* at hearing these words from the boy. Many people might think it incredible that Shivaswami who was barely eight years old and ignorant of the world should have given the answer that he did; but as there is positive and direct evidence for this anecdote, the only conclusion at which one can arrive is the truth of the *Shastraic* theory that the experience of the past births endures in living beings. The *Mahaswamiji* felt that his daily prayer for many years at the time of worshipping Chandramoulishwara: "सच्छिष्यो मे भूयात् मच्छिष्यो पण्डितो भवतु ", that he might be blessed with a worthy disciple who could develop into a great *Jnani* had at last borne fruit. He sent Lakshminarasimha Shastri and

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Shivaswami home with due honours, rewarding the former liberally and giving the latter gifts of fruit and clothes suitable to his age.

To fulfill the objective of his tour, the *Mahaswamiji* had a conference with the Maharaja who was always graciously disposed towards the Math as well as was full of devotion and practical knowledge in worldly affairs. *Mahaswamiji* decided to appoint Shivaswami, the third son of Kunigal Rama Shastri, as his successor. Lakshminarasimha Shastri, at that time, was without a male issue. He looked upon his younger brother as his own son and brought him up with great tenderness and made him forget his sorrow at being so early rendered an orphan. Lakshminarasimha Shastri would seat Shivaswami on his lap and without overtaxing his childish powers, would teach him songs in praise of God, acquaint him with their meaning in easy words and rejoice at his intelligence and his splendid inheritance of merit from previous births. In the bright half of *Jyeshta* in the year *Krodhana* (1865 C.E.) he had performed the boy's *Upanayanam* (investiture of sacred thread) ceremony and after the performance of the first *Upakarma* (annual *Vedic* ritual for all endowed with the sacred thread), he had commenced that teaching which is indispensable to Brahmins, the teaching of the *Vedas*. To this elder brother, the *Mahaswamiji* broached the question of nominating the boy for the Sringeri Peetham.

Lakshminarasimha Shastri did not like to part from the boy; for the installation of the boy as the heir-apparent to

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the Yoga *Peetham* meant that he should be taken away from his home surroundings and brought up henceforth under the auspices of the Guru. The latter said to the Shastri that, according to the prognostications of the horoscope, the boy would be in serious danger of life in his sixteenth year. The Shastri replied that it was all the more reason that a boy, with a short life before him, should not be selected for the Peetham. The Guru said that it was the very reason why the boy should be chosen; for entry into the fourth *Ashrama* was always considered a second birth, whereby the predestined fortunes of bodily birth would lose all force; moreover the grace of Sharadamba, the presiding deity of the Peetham, would avert all misfortunes as the boy would come under Her special protection. This had some effect on the mind of the guardian but still he was unwilling to part with the boy. Then, as per the Guru's instruction the Maharaja convinced the Shastri by making him recollect the message of his father Kunigal Rama Shastri before his death entrusting the boys to the care and guardianship of Maharaja.

The sixth day of the dark half of *Ashada* of *Akshaya*, S.S. 1789 (Friday, the 2nd August, 1866) was appointed as the day for conferring *sannyasa* on Shivaswami and making him the disciple and successor of the *Mahaswamiji*. Orders were issued to all the palace officers to have the necessary preparations completed before that day.

On the day previous to the appointed day, the Maharaja sent a palanquin to fetch Shivaswami to the

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palace and received him in his private chambers. Seating him on his lap, the Maharaja talked to him with great affection. Seeing that the boy's tuft of hair was loose, the Maharaja tried to tie it up in a knot but the hair being short would not allow him to do so. Thereupon, the Maharaja smilingly remarked, "Your hair refuses to be bound up, my sweet boy!" referring to the impending necessity for having it shaved on the morrow. He also said, "Today it is quite easy for me to make you sit by my side; but tomorrow, I shall have to offer you prostrations and stand at a distance." With these and other words he tested the boy's readiness to stand the ordeal. He then bade all the ladies of the palace bow before Shivaswami saying to them, "The dear little Shastri will become a great Guru tomorrow." Presentations of fruit of a great many varieties were then offered to Shivaswami and he was sent back to the house with all the customary palace honours.

At 6 o'clock on the morning of the appointed day, the officials of the palace and the Math, came to Lakshminarasimha Shastri's house with the palanquin, the *chatra*, the *chamara* and other palace honours, to conduct Shivaswami to the Math. The boy had suffered from severe headache the whole of the previous night after his return from the palace and the headache had not left him that morning. Subrahmanya Shastri, a native of *chola-desha* who had continued to be in the house as one of its inmates ever since the days of Kunigal Rama Shastri and had earned the confidence and regard of both Rama Shastri and his son Lakshminarasimha Shastri gave Shivaswami a bath,

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made him perform his morning *Sandhyavandana* and *Agnikarya* and having spoken to Lakshminarasimha Shastri who was lying in great affliction, such words of consolation as were appropriate, made Shivaswami prostrate before his elder brother for the last time and lifted him up and placed him in the palanquin, brought him to the Math and led him before the *Mahaswamiji*.

The *Mahaswamiji* was greatly pleased at seeing the boy upon whom he had set his heart, standing before him, ready to receive sannyasa and sent him to the temple of Lakshmiramana Swami, the place selected for the purpose of performing the ceremonies concerned. There Shivaswami was again made to bathe and perform the other rites that form part of the *sannyasa* ceremony. For the purpose of making *Preshoccharana,* (the declaration of renunciation), Shivaswami was conducted on foot to the lake known as Karangi-kere. Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* also came there and as soon as Shivaswami had made the declaration, he called the boy into his presence, gave him the *Kaupina* (loin cloth), *Kashaya* (ochre robes), a *Danda* (stick), a *Kamandala* (water-pot) and *Padukas* (sandals) necessary for a *Sannyasin* and returned to the temple of Lakshmiramana Swami with his disciple.

There the young *Sannyasin* received at the hands of Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* the *Mahavakya-Upadesha* (initiation into the great *Upanishadic* sentences) and the *Yogapatta* (title); the other ceremonies were also performed. While these ceremonies were taking place, the Maharaja

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was present in the hall which was crowded with palace *Vidwans* and all the prominent persons of Mysore.

The *Yoga-patta* conferred on the new Swami, 'Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati' was a long compound name; but the Guru wanted that the name of his Guru Sacchidananda, who was a great *yogi*, should be given to the initiate; the pundits assembled there were of the opinion that Shiva, the first part of the name given by the father should be added; the Maharaja who was present throughout the ceremonies thought his Guru's name (Narasimha Bharati) should also be added. The result of all this was a long name; people were content to call him the younger Swami. Then the Maharaja and all the pundits and others assembled paid homage to the new Swamiji.

By the time all the ceremonies were completed in strict accordance with the *Shastras*, evening came on. The little Swami being so young and having suffered from severe headache the previous night, besides being subjected to fasting and physical hardship from morning till night, was greatly tired. He was again made to bathe and sit by the side of his Guru and perform the evening *Ahnika* ceremony. He was then given some refreshment consisting of a light meal of fried grains, and made to sleep on an antelope skin by the side of his Guru while the latter performed his evening worship.

The boy soon fell asleep and was heard to murmur in his sleep *'Sarvoham'*, *'Sarvoham'*, *'Sarvoham'*, meaning 'I am all', 'I am all', 'I am all'. Was it cosmic consciousness

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that had come to him on the very first day of his initiation into the fourth order - the feeling of the identity of his Self with the whole universe of existing things? The scriptures say that this great experience had come to great sages like Shuka and Vamadeva when they were infants. The Guru who was then engaged in his usual meditation heard the murmured words. What should have been the delight and amazement of the Guru on that occasion! What should have been the force of experience of past births of the young Swami!

On the second day of the Swami's *sannyasa*, following the practice of the Math, the ceremony of *Pattabhisheka* (coronation) was performed with great pomp. On this occasion, the Maharaja and the Chief Commissioner, Col. Bowring and the other high officials of the State came to the Math and were present during the installation of the young Swami, offered costly gifts and paid him the respects due to his exalted position.

The Maharaja asked the boy on this occasion what he wanted. The reply was that two young elephants were what he desired. Asked what for, he replied that they were wanted for being stationed one on each side of the gate of the Sharadamba temple during *Puja* time waving a *Chowry* each with the trunk. The Maharaja was immensely pleased with the reply and ordered that a young cow-elephant which alone was available then in the palace stables should be immediately sent to the Math. This elephant became a favourite with the young Swami and accompanied him

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during his tours.

Sri Narasimha Bharati was greatly pleased at the success of his efforts for a period of eight years to acquire a worthy disciple, thanks to the grace of Sri Sharadamba and the powerful influence of the Maharaja. He decided to perform the *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* (stay in a single place for two / four months) and the *Vyasa-Puja* for that year on the banks of the Cauvery. Helped by the Maharaja, he came to Pashchimavahini near Srirangapatnam and underwent the *Chaturmasya* ceremony.

The old Guru now wished that the young Swami should get accustomed to the tradition of the Math and the duties and responsibilities of touring. For constant touring throughout the extensive jurisdiction of the *Peetham* was required for teaching to the people the *Vaidika-Dharma* as laid down in the scriptures and imparting the higher *Upanishadic-Vidya* to such as were competent and in proportion as they could profit by it. It was not enough that the Guru should be deeply versed in the *Shastras*. His eloquence should be persuasive and convincing and his personality should be an inspiration to those who come in contact with him. So, the Guru had the intention of taking the young Swami on an extended tour. After the *Charturmasya-Sankalpa* had been fulfilled, he proceeded on his further travel taking the young Swami with him to Mysore.

The Guru's watchfulness in providing for the literary education of his young charge and his proper upbringing,

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in the midst of a protracted tour, was indicative of his practical foresight and solicitude and love. In order to teach *Amara* (Sanskrit lexicon*)* and *Shabdas* (nouns and their declensions) he engaged an old pundit by name Kunigal Shama Shastri who was in his time a pupil of the late Kunigal Rama Shastri.

The Guru surrounded the young Swami with promising intelligent and well-behaved boys of his age, who could board and study with him and also kept him out of the harm's way. When his secular studies for the day were over, the disciple was kept by the Guru by his side and given instructions by the *Mahaswamiji* himself, in the niceties of *Vedic Dharma*, the grandeur of piety and love to *Ishwara*, the duties of a *Sannyasin* and incumbent of the Peetham. The old Guru spared the necessary time for it in the midst of his heavy duties. The young Swami who left his house and came away to the Math on the morning of the day he assumed *sannyasa* had no opportunity of again seeing his brother or his other relations for some time and it must be said that indeed he never thought of them again as his relations. He looked upon Sri Narasimha Bharati as not only his Guru but his father, mother, brother and God and made it his duty to act strictly in accordance with his wishes and strive to please him every minute of his life.

It is no exaggeration to say that the responsibilities undertaken by Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* in the matter of protecting and educating his young disciple were no less arduous than those undertaken by *Maharshi*

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Vishwamitra in respect of Rama and Lakshmana when their father king Dasharatha being requested by the Maharishi sent them with him while they were yet extremely young.

The young Swami would rise at 6 o'clock every morning as commanded by the *Mahaswamiji* and having bathed, he would perform his *ahnika* ceremonies. He would then proceed to worship God Chandramoulishwara in the image presented to him by his Guru; and having prostrated before his Guru in accordance with the rules of *sannyasa,* he would take his first meal of the day at about 11 o'clock.

Even though he did not make any efforts to commit to memory the lessons of each day, yet he displayed a phenomenal capacity to repeat them perfectly well whenever called upon to do so, by the teacher. Two *sargas* of *Raghuvamsha*, two of *Kumara-sambhava*, and one *Magha* – in all, five *sargas* of *Kavya* together with four *kandas* of *Champu-ramayana* were studied by the Swami under Kunigal Shama Shastri. Before he had completed one or two *sargas* of *Kavya*, the Swami was able to read other works which were new to him; he posed his doubts which occurred to him in the course of his reading to the Shastri.

When Shama Shastri began to teach *Naishada* to the young Swami, the teacher informed Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* of his high opinion regarding the intelligence and natural capacity of the young Swami and suggested that Lakshminarasimha Shastri might be appointed teacher

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in his stead.

The delight of Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* and of Lakshminarasimha Shastri at hearing the progress of the young Swami knew no bounds. Lakshminarasimha Shastri began to teach the young Swami two or three *sargas* of *Naishada* and the Swami became fairly well-versed in literature when he was about eleven years old. In his twelfth year, he began to learn *Tarka*, which was the branch of learning that had descended in his family for generations from father to son and the one that was necessary for the mastery of every other *Shastra*. Three pupils from South India, who were intelligent and capable, were associated with the Swami in his lessons. As soon as the Swami had mastered *Tarka-sangraha*, *Deepika* and *Muktavali*, he was asked to teach these subjects one after the other to his fellow pupils who were less able. Soon he became very proficient in *Tarka*. As the Swami's education had to be conducted during his itineration ever since he assumed *sannyasa*, uninterrupted study was not possible in his case and he had to spend a fairly long time over this one subject of study.

Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* set out with his disciple from Mysore and went first to Nanjangud to visit God Srikantheshwara. The old master's love for his young pupil was palpable once when the young Swami fell ill, during a visit to the shrine of Srikantheswara of Nanjangud. The master intensely prayed for the recovery of his disciple, himself offered worship to the deity there and

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when the boy recovered in response, as the master believed, to his devout prayer, the master ordered a gold image of the young Swami's likeness to be made and had it put-up in front of the *Peetham* of the *Utsava-murti* (the procession image) of the deity of the temple, as a sign that the boy was now entrusted to the care of a greater being than himself. The statuette is still to be seen on the silver pedestal in front of the processional image of Lord Srikantheshwara.

From Nanjangud, the Swami descended the ghats through Chamarajnagara and went into the Madras Presidency. After visiting Coimbatore, Salem, Tiruchy, Chittoor, Kadappa, Kurnool, Madras and other places, and having performed pilgrimages to the holy places in the vicinity, the Swamiji returned to Sringeri on Friday, the second day of the dark half of *Ashada* in the year *Ishwara* (1877 C.E).

The young Swami's devotion and affection to the master were equally great. This can be seen from the fine hymns sung by him on several occasions. The following stanza, out of them, may serve as a specimen:

स्वप्ने ममोत्तमाङ्गे स्वयमाहूयातिकरुणया चरणौ ।
दधतस्तव निकटे मम गुरुवर नरसिंह याचना कास्ति ॥

(O Narasimha, the pre-eminent Guru, what else is there to ask of you, who, out of your own volition, called me in my dream and placed your feet on my head with extreme compassion?)

As Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* left Sringeri in

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the year *Krodhana* and after extensive tour returned to Sringeri in the year *Ishwara*, his tour lasted about twelve years and at the end of that tour, Sri Narasimha Bharati was eighty years old, while the young Swami was twenty.

At this time, Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar, son of the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was a minor. The Maharani, Devajammanni of Sitavilas Sannidhana was one who fully understood the power of Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* to initiate his pupils into religious truth, became desirous of obtaining for her son an interview with the *Mahaswamiji* and an initiation into *Shiva-Panchakshari-Mantra*. Aware that the Guru was already eighty years of age, she decided that no time was to be lost and communicated her wishes to the *Mahaswamiji* by letter.

The *Mahaswamiji* accepted the invitation extended to him by the Maharani of Mysore and reached the capital city with his disciple on Sunday, the second of the bright half of *Phalguna* of the year *Bahudhanya* 1879 C.E. Being received with great cordiality by the Maharani Devajammanni of Sita Vilas Sannidhana, he initiated Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar into the mysteries of *Shiva Panchakshari Mantra*. In the course of conversation, he told Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar that the mutual love and regard which had existed between himself and Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar would continue in the relations between his young disciple and Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar. A pearl necklace of great value was presented by the young Swami to Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar on this occasion. After the

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presentation of *Phala-Mantrakshata* the *Mahaswamiji* took leave of the Maharaja and returned to Sringeri in great satisfaction.

The Guru initiated the young Swami into several *mantras* needed for the *Upasana* of the deities worshipped in the Peetham. Before the young Swami was twenty years old, he had received his initiation at the hands of his Guru into the mysteries of *Srividya*, *Narasimha-mantra* and *Dakshinamurti-mantra* as transmitted from Guru to disciple for generations in the Sringeri Math. He was also initiated into some of the most necessary portions of yoga and the methods of *Nirguna-Samadhi*. As has been already pointed out, the wonderful effects of the experiences of Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swamiji in his past births manifested themselves in several ways. After his initiation by his Guru, he became enamoured of yoga and was constantly reading works on that subject and making inquiries regarding it if any persons proficient in that art came to see him. These facts were known to the Guru who rejoiced in the progress of his pupil and encouraged him to some extent; but he was telling him from time to time that the time had not yet come for sitting down to the practice of yoga or the repetition of mantras, that he should cultivate the learning of *Shastras* as a form of worship of Saraswati and that the practice of *yoga* and the *mantras* would easily be acquired by him after the completion of his studies in the *Shastras*.

But whatever others may say and howsoever much

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one may think within oneself, the force of past experiences is indeed overwhelming. How can man fail to act in accordance with it? How can he oppose it? The young Swami became apathetic to the acquisition of learning and to worldly affairs. An intense desire seized him that he should wander forth alone into the wilderness and attain emancipation by the realization of *jnana*. He lost his cheerfulness and enthusiasm for work. He became indifferent to food and bodily wants and always appeared gloomy. Lakshminarasimha Shastri who came to learn the condition of the young Swami from his classmates attempted to ascertain the cause by questioning him on the subject. Then, the Swami who remembered how Sri Rama had responded under similar circumstances to his Guru, Vasishta, quoted the Lord's very own words:

प्राक्तनं वासनाजालं नियोज्यति मां यथा ।
मुने तथैव तिष्ठामि कृपणः किं करोम्यहम् ॥

(O Muni, I am a hapless person walking in the path set by the web of *Vasanas* (tendencies) of my previous births. What can I do?)

Lakshminarasimha Shastri narrated anecdotes and experiences from the *Vedas* and from daily life and prayed that the impulses of *Vairagya* which had come to the young Swami so early in life should be stemmed. But though Lakshminarasimha Shastri was held by the young Swami in high regard, it proved to be of no avail in the present situation.

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The whole situation was then brought to the notice of the Guru who came to the decision that it was necessary to counteract the mental tendencies of the young Swami. He sent for him and questioned him in private regarding his intentions. The aged *Mahaswamiji* had become hard of hearing and it was not possible for anyone to carry on long conversations with him by word of mouth. Knowing this, the young Swami made known to him in writing, his desire to retire into a forest for the purpose of meditation. First, the young Swami would write out all that he had to say and the Guru would read it and reply by word of mouth. Then, again, the disciple would try to meet the objections raised by his Guru and put his own views and arguments in writing to which the Guru would again reply by word of mouth and so on. In this manner, the discussion went on.

It was not possible to overcome the arguments and explanations offered by the young Swami or to defeat him from his purpose by means of more cogent or weighty reasoning. It was, however, necessary that he should be made to change his mind. The aged Guru therefore overcame him by saying that any attempts that he might make contrary to the wish of his Guru would be of no avail. He consoled him, at the same time, saying that in course of time, he would grow up into a great *yogi* like Sadashivendra though that may not be in his Guru's own time. In this manner, he succeeded in weaning the young Swami from his intentions, telling him that Sringeri was a place eminently suitable for a life of solitude, *jnana* and *tapas*, that there were vast and beautiful forests close by

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and that he might engage himself in yoga at Sringeri when the time is ripe for it.

This circumstance is mentioned in one of the stanzas of *Sharada-shatashloki-stava* composed many years later by Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*.

आज्ञाऽऽसीद्गौरवी मे तव खलु करुणावारिधिः शारदाम्बा
साष्टाङ्गं योगमारादुपदिशति भवानौरसः सूनुरस्याः ।

(My Guru's authoritative utterance to me was, "Your mother Sharada, the ocean of mercy, will definitely instruct you soon about yoga, which has eight limbs. You are Her own child.")

आशावस्त्रः सदात्मन्यविरतहृदयस्त्यक्तसर्वानुरागाः
काये चक्षुर्मुखेष्वप्यनुदितममतः क्वापि कस्मिश्चकाले ।
शैलाग्रेऽरण्यकोणे क्वचिदपि पुलिने क्वापि रेवातटे वा
गङ्गातीरेऽथ तुङ्गातटभुवि च कदा स्वैरचारी भवेयम् ॥

(When shall I become a wanderer at will on mountain peaks or in the depths of the forests, on sandy banks or on the banks of rivers like the Narmada, the Ganga or the Tunga, with the four directions of the empty space for my only clothing, never for a moment dissociated from the Self, abandoning all attachments and never identifying myself with the body or the senses?)

The young Swami was satisfied with the words of assurance from His Guru and the gloom in his mind left him. Sri Narasimha Bharati completed the education of the

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young Swami by having him instructed in the *Prasthanatraya* (The *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad-gita* and the *Brahma-sutras*) with the *Bhashyas;* it is learnt that he personally taught the young Swami the *Sutra-Bhashya.* He also got him to perform *Bhashya-Shanti* once again after their return to Sringeri. Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* was now about 82 years of age. His body had become emaciated through old age.

The worship of Sri Chandramoulishwara, the hoary *linga* transmitted from Sri Shankaracharya, which he had performed without a break all his life time had to be delegated to his disciple; but his desire to go for a pilgrimage to Gokarna never left him. His extreme old age and his bodily condition made everyone shrink from fulfilling his wish. As the *Mahaswamiji* was constantly meditating on Gokarna and Mahabaleshwara, a wonderful thing happened which would appear to show that God enabled him to gratify his wishes. On the day previous to his leaving the mortal coil, while the *Mahaswamiji* was sleeping, he began to speak aloud so that all who were near him heard him. It might be said that he was speaking in a dream. The *Mahaswamiji* first said, "Brahmins from Gokarna have come to take me with them. Let the palanquin be got ready," and then after two or three minutes, "Is the palanquin ready? Let me be seated on it." About an hour after this he again spoke and said, "How wonderful! They have taken me to Gokarna and brought me back so soon! Our palanquin bearers are very capable fellows. Let them be rewarded."After this, the *Mahaswamiji*

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never spoke. It was Friday morning, about 9 o'clock, the second bright half of *Jyeshta* of the year *Pramadi* (1879 C.E) when the master cast off his mortal coil and attained *Videha- Mukti*.

The *Mahaswamiji* had adorned the throne of transcendental wisdom for a long period of sixty two years; he himself was eighty two years old. He had found the fortunes of the Math at low ebb when he took charge; he was, himself new and inexperienced, barely twenty years of age, when he was faced with a very onerous responsibility; his own education and training had been imperfect; but he had an exceptionally strong will and conquered all difficulties. He had become a great scholar; he had acquired great yogic powers; he found an impoverished Math when he took charge and left it in a flourishing condition. The disciple Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swamiji was twenty two years old when the Guru cast off his mortal coil.

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3. *First Years of Incumbency*

The young Swamiji's sorrow knew no bounds when the Guru cast off his mortal coil; the Guru had adopted the young Swamiji while he was still in his boyhood and, for thirteen years, had made him his constant companion and had brought him up with great affection. It was not possible for the young Swamiji to console himself or for others to console him. All the rites and ceremonies connected with the interment of the body of the Guru were performed strictly in the manner prescribed in the scriptures and in accordance with established custom. By the time they were completed, it was midnight. The young Swamiji did not partake of any food and sleep forsook him. He was again and again speaking of his great Guru and his attributes, recollecting his great love and graciousness towards the Guru and lamenting his loss. While the Swamiji was in this condition, he felt exhausted and a bit drowsy. It seemed to him that he was in the presence of the great Guru who asked him, "What is it you are doing? Giving up food and water! I am not gone – I am here." The Swamiji opened his eyes but saw nothing. He then recollected some words that his Guru had said to him while he was still in the body: "Separation from me will be unendurable to you. I am now conscribed as it were by this

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body. After giving up this body, I will be all-pervasive. This alone will be the difference; nothing else." Swamiji recalled these words, derived great consolation from them and overcame his sorrow.

The shedding of the mortal coil of the great Guru was communicated by means of *Srimukha* (a communiqué from the Math) to his disciples all over the country and, among others, to Gopala Shastri, the representative of the Sringeri Math and the worshipper of the temple at Gokarna. When the *Srimukha* reached him, he was greatly astonished. The reason for his astonishment lay in this: On the day previous to the demise of the old *Mahaswamiji*, he had dreamt that he was in the temple at Gokarna, that Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* had arrived there in a palanquin, and that while he stood there after performing *Namaskara* (salutation) to the *Mahaswamiji*, the latter inquired about his welfare and went close to the image of Mahabaleshwara, worshipped the image and performed *nirajana* (waving of lit camphor) before the deity. Gopala Shastri himself came to Sringeri and acquainted Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swamiji with these details. The Swamiji and the others marveled much at the greatness of the Guru who had passed away and came to the conclusion that to fulfill the devout wish of the *Mahaswamiji*, *Ishwara* Himself had taken him in spirit to Gokarna and permitted him to behold the deity.

The new *Mahaswamiji*'s (Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*) installation

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ceremony was celebrated in accordance with the wishes of the people of Sringeri on Friday, the eighth of the bright half of *Ashada* of the year *Pramadi* (27th June 1879).

For a period of six years from the day on which his Guru shed his mortal coil, not a day passed on which the *Mahaswamiji* did not worship at his Guru's *Adhishtanam* (shrine) with full faith and devotion. He made up his mind that he would not undertake any task in connection with the Math or any observance necessary for his salvation without going to his master's *Adhishtanam* and worshipping him and obtaining his assent; and he stuck to his determination. The *Mahaswamiji* thus passed his days in Sringeri, performing the duties appropriate to his *Ashrama* (stage of life) worshipping his Guru and Chandramoulishwara, instructing his pupils in *Tarka* and *Vedanta* and adding to his own learning by further study. Needless to mention, he held the worship of his Guru to be equivalent to the worship of all the Gods.

It has already been stated that Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* was, from his boyhood, bent on acquiring proficiency in Yoga. Yoga can be broadly classified under the heads *Hathayoga* and *Rajayoga*. In the former, the emphasis is on the control of the body and the breath to gain restraint of the mind, while the latter is characterized by the practice of concentration culminating in the thorough restraint of the mind. *Hathayoga* leads to *Rajayoga*. Restraint of the mind, which characterizes *Yoga*, enables one to engage in *Jnanabhyasa*

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(the practice of knowledge) culminating in the realization of oneself as non-different from the Supreme Brahman. Such direct realization of the Truth liberates one from *Samsara*, the cycle of births and deaths. The *Mahaswamiji* mastered *Yoga-asanas*, special bodily postures, prescribed in the *Yoga* texts and engaged, in the course of his mastery of *Hathayoga*, in the practice of *Pranayama*.

Pranayama has three components: *Pooraka*, inhalation of breath, *Kumbhaka*, retention of breath after inhalation or remaining without breathing after complete exhalation and *Rechaka,* complete exhalation of breath. It is said that as one masters the control of breath one would encounter an outburst of profuse perspiration, then the experience of bodily tremors and then elevation. The Agent of the Math, Sri Srikantha Shastri, was fortunate to witness such observable features of *Pranayama* when the *Mahaswamiji* was engaged in *Pranayama*. The aim of *Pranayama* is the mastery over the mind and perspiration, etc., are just its associated external aspects.

In the texts of *Hathayoga*, there is a description of the '*Khechari-Mudra*' and this is eulogized. Through *Chedana* (the cutting of the base of the tongue little by little), *Calana* (the shaking of the tongue sideways by holding it with the fingers) and *Dohana* (stretching the tongue like the udder of a cow when milking the cow), the tongue should be made long. Then the tongue should be thrust upwards through the opening of the back of the throat and should be kept at the level of the eyebrow. This is said to mark the

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Khechari-Mudra and this *Mudra* is said to result in the descent of ambrosia from the *Sahasrara-Chakra*, the *yogic* centre in the head. The *Mahaswamiji* wished to practise the *Khechari-Mudra.* This is also known as *Lambika-yoga*. Sri Vidya Tirtha, the 10th *Jagadguru* of Sri Sringeri Sharada *Peetham* is reputed to have thoroughly mastered *lambika-yoga*.

A bairagi from North India named Ganga Das arrived at Sringeri. When the *Mahaswamiji* ascertained that Ganga Das was proficient in *Hathayoga* and knowledgeable about the *Khechari-Mudra,* he arranged for the latter to stay for some time at Sringeri, had discussion about *Yoga* with him and personally initiated the practice of *Khechari-Mudra* by observing dietary restrictions like giving up salt and pungent items and resorting to *Chedana*, *Calana* and *Dohana*. He gradually progressed to duly thrusting his tongue upwards through the opening at the back of the throat. However, not being enamoured of the *Khechari-Mudra*, he finally discarded it and moved on, from *Hathayoga*, to *Rajayoga*, which He mastered. The eight limbs of *Raja-yoga* are: *Yama* or restraints (non-injury to all beings, truthfulness, abstinence from theft, thorough continence and non-acceptance of any means of enjoyment in excess of what is needed for life), *Niyamas* or observances (purity, contentment, austerity, study and dedication to God), *Asanas* (specified bodily postures), *Pranayama* (the control of breath), *Pratyahara* (the withdrawal of the senses from their objects), *Dharana* (the fixation of the mind on a locus), *Dhyana* (the one-pointed

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flow of thoughts towards the object of focus), and *Samadhi* (absorption on the object of focus). The *Mahaswamiji* mastered *Samadhi* for Self-realization.

Six years of quiet, secluded life thus went by, a period of studying and teaching, of spiritual communion in his Guru's shrine and *yogic* practices. By constant study of books and discussion of religious and philosophical questions and lectures to the advanced students who came to him for instruction, his knowledge of the *Shastras* had become unrivalled; possessed of a mighty intellect, exceptionally combined with child-like simplicity and sweetness of temper, trained and moulded into shape by two master-minds such as his elder brother and the advanced *yogi*, his own Guru, it is no wonder that in the six years of secluded study, contemplation and literary discussion, he grew into a fascinating specimen of human excellence.

In the year *Parthiva* (December, 1885 C.E) the *Mahaswamiji* was informed that Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar, the youthful Maharaja of Mysore would be pleased to pay a visit to Sringeri and have the Guru's *Darshan*. He was the first Maharaja of Mysore to visit Sringeri. The *Mahaswamiji* made all necessary arrangements through his agents and received His Highness who had arrived along with his *Dewan* K. Seshadri Iyer, the British Resident Mr. Girdlestone and their retinue; all of them arrived at Sringeri on Monday, the full moon day of *Margasirsha* in the year *Parthiva* (7th

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December 1885) and remained at Sringeri for two days. The *Mahaswamiji* knew that it was the intention of his Guru, Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* to confer some conspicuous honour on the Maharaja of Mysore and felt that the time had come to fulfill his Guru's wishes.

On this occasion, the *Mahaswamiji* presented the Maharaja with a crown set with precious stones. Then the *Mahaswamiji* said, "The crown has been with the Gurus who have come in an unbroken succession from Sri Vidyaranya, the 12th *Jagadguru* of the Sringeri Sharada *Peetham* who established the throne of the Maharajas of Mysore in Vijayanagara (Anegondi) which was later transferred to Mysore. It was therefore appropriate that the throne and the crown should both together be in the enjoyment of the rulers who represented the Karnataka empire. My Guru had indeed wished to honour the Maharaja with the crown and now has come the opportunity for giving effect to it; the great *yogi*'s *Sankalpa* can never go unfulfilled." Saying these words, the *Mahaswamiji* himself placed the crown on the head of the young ruler with his blessings. The crown gifted by the *Mahaswamiji* is now kept as one of the objects of worship in the palace of Mysore.

Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* possessed great learning. Self-realization and the courage of it appeared personified in him. About this time, by the inspiration of Sri Sharadamba, it occurred to him that he should set out on a tour for the purpose of

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fulfilling his duty of spreading righteousness through the land in accordance with the injunctions of his Guru. A well-known and highly respected Jagirdar of Western India by name Annasaheb Vinchookar was then on a visit to the *Mahaswamiji* at Sringeri. He begged the *Mahaswamiji* to visit Northern India and offered to accompany him and see that all necessary arrangements were made for the tour. He submitted to the *Mahaswamiji* that thousands of *Mahaswamiji*'s disciples were longing to behold him. This request on the part of the Jagirdar helped to strengthen the *Mahaswamiji*'s desire to travel in Northern India.

In accordance with the usual custom, he prayed for permission to set out on his travel both to his Guru and to Sri Sharadamba and from both he received tokens of assent. The *Mahaswamiji* was unwilling to interrupt the worship of his own great Guru which he had daily carried on at the Guru's *Adhishthanam* (temple) without a break for six years and was still hesitating. Such being the case, on a certain day, when the *Mahaswamiji* went to the Guru's *Adhishthanam* to worship as usual, he saw a small *bana-linga* placed on the *pani-peetham* of the *linga* embedded in the Adhishthanam. Inquiries were made as to how the *bana-linga* came there but no one knew. When the *Mahaswamiji* saw the *bana-linga*, he was greatly pleased. It seemed to him that knowing the reason of his hesitation to set out travelling, his own great Guru had sent the *bana-linga* as a token to be taken with the *Mahaswamiji* on his tours and worshipped daily. Until the day of setting out on his travels, the *Mahaswamiji* kept the *bana-linga* on the

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Adhishthanam and worshipped it.

Satisfied with the signs he got from his Guru in favour of the tour, the *Mahaswamiji* decided to visit Northern India. The golden palanquin presented by Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in the year *Ananda* was somewhat damaged. It was sent to Mysore and thoroughly refurbished. All preparations for the tour were completed. On Friday, the fifth of the bright half of *Margasirsha* in the year *Parthiva,* S.S. 1809 (1886 C.E) the *Mahaswamiji* left Sringeri with his followers taking with him the idols of Sri Chandramoulishwara and Ratnagarbha Ganapati which have been handed down to the succeeding Acharyas for generations, as well as the newly acquired *bana-linga* and proceeded to Sacchidanandapura, a village close to Sringeri.

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4. First Independent Tour

Having toured in the districts of Kadur and Shimoga in the Mysore state for eleven months, the *Mahaswamiji* desired, before going to Western India, to perform the pilgrimage of Gokarna which had been the wish of his Guru's heart even during his last moments. He entered the district of North Canara, having passed through Banavasi and Sirsi. He reached Gokarna at 8 o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the fifth of the dark half of *Magha* in the year *Vyaya*, S.S 1810 (1887 C.E.) and after being taken in procession through the tour, he visited the temple of Lord Sri Mahabaleshwara and was lodged in the branch Math of the Peetham. Gokarna is on the west coast. Here the *linga* of Mahabaleshwara faces west; the place is held in great esteem as stated in the *Puranas*. Hindus of all sects from all parts of India come in large numbers to visit the place.

Local tradition states that the *linga* was granted to Ravana by Lord Paramashiva, when he was practising severe penance on Mount Kailasa, that on his way to Lanka he had to stop for a time near this spot for purposes of ablutions, that on looking out for a person to keep the *linga* safe during his ablutions, a short Brahmin appeared before him, who agreed to keep it safe for a few minutes, on the understanding that he would call thrice before he left and

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would go away leaving it on the ground if he did not respond to the call. Ravana, it is said, agreed to the condition. While he was engaged in ablutions, the man (It is said that he is none other than Lord Ganapati) called thrice and as Ravana could not come at once, he left the *linga* on the ground and went his way. After that Ravana did his best to lift the *linga* but failed, and recognizing the will of *Ishwara*, worshipped the *linga* where it stood and went his way.

The *Mahaswamiji* stopped at Gokarna for two months, in the earlier part of which occurred the festival of Shivaratri. In the shrine at Gokarna, the linga can be worshipped by all Hindus. Ordinarily, some two or three hundred thousand people assemble here every year on the day of Shivaratri. As the *Mahaswamiji* arrived at Gokarna in time for Shivaratri, the number of pilgrims during his visit was double the usual number. How difficult it must have been for everyone to go into the temple and worship the deity in these circumstances! As the *Mahaswamiji* was held in great reverence, the people cheerfully gave way to the *Mahaswamiji* to proceed to the temple and exclusively worship the deity for long; the temple authorities extended their cooperation. The *Mahaswamiji* entered the temple in the third *yama* or at midnight and worshipped the deity for three hours with intense devotion, offered his valuable gifts of a diamond necklace with fine strings of pearls and a necklace of *Rudraksha* besides costly clothes. On the occasion the *Mahaswamiji* composed a special Stotram on Lord Mahabaleshwara and returned to the Math after

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having blessed the innumerable devotees. While he was at Gokarna, the *Mahaswamiji* became afflicted by a urinary disease and his illness gave cause for anxiety; but just as in the case of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada, for whom after the completion of the sixteen years of life vouchsafed to him by *Ishwara*, Vyasa *Maharshi* appeared before him and granted him an extension of another sixteen years of lifetime to vanquish various anti-*Vedic* cults and to reestablish *Adhyatmavidya* (wisdom of the *Atman*), even so, as there were many important duties to be fulfilled by Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*, the illness of this illustrious Guru subsided by the grace of Sri Mahabaleshwara.

The *Mahaswamiji* remained in the sacred place of Gokarna for two months; during this period, the disciples had the privilege of listening to the *Mahaswamiji*'s sagacious clarifications on a variety of knotty questions concerning *Varnashrama-Dharma.* From Gokarna, the *Mahaswamiji* proceeded North and travelled into the Bombay presidency, passing through the district of Dharwar.

At that time, the Raja of Jamkhandi was Ramachandra Rao Appasaheb, a direct descendant of the famous Parashuram Bhau of the Peshwa days. He was accomplished, capable and courageous and he had raised his little State to a condition of great prosperity by his skillful administration and had proved himself a wise administrator. As his activities, right from his boyhood,

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were mainly worldly, his faith and devotion in matters spiritual were very limited. However, he had belief in the existence of God. In proof of this, it may be stated that he had built a beautiful temple made of marble in his State and had dedicated it to the Goddess Tripurasundari and he had also made necessary arrangements for Her daily worship as well as for a grand procession during Dasara. Appasaheb learnt that Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*, the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri, had come in the course of his travels close to his territory and that he was a great Guru. Under ordinary circumstances, the Chief would have felt no attraction towards an ascetic; but as the result of the good deeds done by him in his past births, he felt drawn towards the *Mahaswamiji* by an inexplicable love and devotion and he became desirous to behold him.

When the *Mahaswamiji* was at some distance from Jamkhandi, Appasaheb sent his agents to the *Mahaswamiji* with a request to the *Mahaswamiji* to grace his capital city with his presence. The *Mahaswamiji* learnt through the Raja's agents and others, the past and present mental state of Appasaheb and that his want of faith in the past was due to the absence of proper influences for bringing about a change. He saw that it was his duty to enter the territories of the Raja and give him an opportunity for developing his faith. He, therefore, sent a reply through the Chief's agents accepting the invitation. The Raja was extremely happy to receive a favourable reply from the *Mahaswamiji*. He made suitable arrangements to receive the *Mahaswamiji* in keeping with the Guru's greatness and his exalted rank. He

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had a *pandal* erected near a lake called Kattegiri about a mile and half from Jamkhandi to receive the *Mahaswamiji* and beheld him for the first time.

No sooner had the *Mahaswamiji* inquired of the Raja's welfare with his smiling countenance than the Raja lost for a time, all consciousness of the things around him. His joy knew no bounds. The hairs of his body stood on end. Tears began to flow profusely from his eyes. His voice became choked. Needless to say, the Raja had undergone a transformation. At 8 o'clock in the morning of the 16th of September, 1887, the *Mahaswamiji* entered Jamkhandi, accompanied by the regalia of the Sringeri Math and the Jamkhandi State and encamped on the beautiful and holy place known as Ramatirtha. The Raja's respect and devotion to the *Mahaswamiji* had grown considerably even in that short period. He entertained the Guru as his respected guest for some days in his capital city and submitted to him a beautiful diamond necklace of exquisite European design costing about Rs.12,000/- and bearing on the obverse of its central pendant, an engraving of Dagi Saheb, his own adopted son. He prayed to be allowed to defray every year all the expenses incurred in Sringeri on the day of *Moola-Nakshatra* during *Dasara* and to send his own agents to Sringeri every year to pay the annual contribution from his State. He subsequently made the offer in writing and from that day to this, the promise has been fulfilled every year without a break. In these and other ways, he served the *Mahaswamiji* with great zeal and earned his love and regard. He received valuable advice for

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his guidance as well as *Mantropadesha* at the hands of the *Mahaswamiji* and became one of his most prominent disciples.

It may be mentioned here that when the *Mahaswamiji* was in Bellary on his way back to Sringeri, Ramachandra Rao Appasaheb once again visited him and after obtaining initiation for his son at the hands of the *Mahaswamiji*, returned to his State. And again after the *Mahaswamiji* had returned to Sringeri, he came there with all his retinue, enjoyed the hospitality extended to him by the *Mahaswamiji*, offered a tribute of gold coins to the *Mahaswamiji* and made a gift of a beautiful silver throne to the *Mahaswamiji*. He showed his reverence for the *Mahaswamiji* by requesting him to place his foot on the back of his little son before ascending to take his seat on the chair placed before the image of Sri Sharada. The *Mahaswamiji* was greatly touched by the devotion shown to him by the Raja, accepted the gift of the silver throne and permitted him to return to his State after treating him and his equally devoted son with royal honours.

After Jamkhandi, the *Mahaswamiji* visited the native states of Miraj, Sangli, Kurundwad as well as other smaller States at the request of the Rajas concerned and having conferred his blessings on them and their people, he entered Kolhapur. The Raja of Kolhapur was yet a minor. The *Mahaswamiji* was received with great hospitality by the Maharani of Kolhapur and visited the temple of Goddess Mahalakshmi. There is a well known Math named

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Sankeshwara Math in Kolhapur, which is regarded as a branch of the Sringeri Math, and the people of Kolhapur, worshipped the Swamiji of this Math and held him in great honour. The Rajas of Kolhapur have granted some *inam* villages to support this Math. When the *Jagadguru* visited Kolhapur, the head of the said Math paid obeisance to him and respectfully invited him to visit his premises. The *Jagadguru* accepted his sincere invitation. Having learnt that the people of Kolhapur, both *Vaidikas* and *Laukikas,* were well-read in Sanskrit and capable of conversing in that language, the *Jagadguru* was greatly pleased. During his stay in that place, he gave lectures regarding *Dharma* and conducted discourses in matters of *Shastra* in Sanskrit itself; needless to say, his disciples were greatly pleased. In the course of this tour, the *Mahaswamiji* went very near to Pune. The *Mahaswamiji* was gratified at the love and regard shown to him in these places.

The *Mahaswamiji* decided to return to Sringeri and on the way back, had to stop at Bellary. Bellary is a fairly large town of the Madras presidency. Hearing that the *Jagadguru* was in their district, many people of Bellary begged that he should visit their city and bless them. This devout request was one that could not be ignored and so, the *Mahaswamiji* decided to visit Bellary. For some thirty years before this, communal tension had been brewing here. Some people of Bellary petitioned the British local authorities that the *Mahaswamiji* should not enter the town on a palanquin with all his paraphernalia. The Collector of the district looked into the connected old records and found that

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precedent had established the *Mahaswamiji*'s right to enter the town. A riot was apprehended; but the authorities made the necessary security arrangements and the procession passed without a hitch. The fact was that, a person had only to see the *Mahaswamiji* and all his prejudices vanished at once. His genial smile characterized by an indescribable charm of expression won the hearts of all beholders, whether they were believers or otherwise. If a mere *Darshan* of the *Jagadguru* could do so much, what needs to be said of the privilege of hearing his sweet, simple, yet edifying flow of words, or of the rarer privilege of having a private audience with him?

The *Mahaswamiji* performed his *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* in Bellary and remained there for two months. His disciples in that place took upon themselves the whole of the Math expenses during that period and served him with great devotion. It has already been said that the Raja of Jamkhandi visited the *Mahaswamiji* here. Another distinguished visitor was the late *Rajyadhurandhara* Sri K.Seshadri Iyer, the illustrious *Dewan* of Mysore who looked upon the *Jagadguru* as an incarnation of God. Sri Sheshadri Iyer came to Bellary and underwent *Bhashya-Shanti* at the hands of the Guru and received his blessings.

A short account of Sri K. Sheshadri Iyer's career cannot be held to be out of place in this connection. He was born at Palghat in the Madras Presidency of poor parents. With the help of his elder brother, he received English education and had a distinguished educational career. Helped by Mr. C.

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Rangacharlu, *Dewan* of Mysore, who was a farsighted statesman and had marked him out for a great career, he entered the Mysore Service and held the office of *Dewan* for eighteen years and became famous. His associations, training and occupation were such that he was merged in worldly affairs and had no time for thinking of spiritual matters; but as the effect of his experiences in past births, he was led almost against his will to spiritual contemplation in accordance with the words of *Bhagawan* Sri Krishna, "By that very practice of a past life, he who has fallen from Yoga is carried forward even in spite of himself."

This happened when he accompanied His Highness Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar to Sringeri in 1885. On that occasion, when he first caught sight of the *Mahaswamiji*, a veil that covered his mind was rent, his undesirable experiences of the past crumbled away and a light suddenly dawned upon him. The desire came upon him that he should bathe in the River Tunga, that he should smear the sacred ashes on his forehead in accordance with ancient practice and that he should perform his *Sandhyavandana* by the riverside; and he at once did it. He sought a private interview with the *Mahaswamiji*, and informed him of the change that had been brought in him. The *Mahaswamiji* was pleased and encouraged him in his aspirations, removed some doubts that had arisen in his mind by means of rational and *Shastraic* arguments and illustrations from daily life and brought him to believe in the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, in right conduct and right living.

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From that day till the day of his death, the love and devotion of K. Sheshadri Iyer towards the *Mahaswamiji* was exemplary. He was initiated into several mantras by *Mahaswamiji*. He also learnt some of the principal methods of *Yoga* and made fair progress in it. He visited the *Mahaswamiji* often, was numbered among his most cherished disciples, learnt from him the methods of contemplating *Nirguna-Brahman* and endeavoured to secure supreme happiness; but as he was occupied with worldly affairs he was unable to perfect himself in spiritual training. It was his earnest desire to spend some years after his retirement at the feet of his Guru to complete his spiritual education but that ambition was not fulfilled owing to his sudden death.

The public never knew the attachment that existed between this Guru and disciple. It might have seemed to superficial observers that the *Mahaswamiji* loved his pupil for self-interest and that the disciple loved his *Mahaswamiji* from sectarian sympathy. But neither of these distinguished personages was actuated by motives of power, wealth or common-place ambitions. The real cause of attachment that existed between the *Mahaswamiji* and the *Dewan* was the love and regard that sprang up between them from many a discussion that they carried on with regard to spiritual matters. The fame of Seshadri Iyer as a capable and remarkable administrator was established both at home and abroad. His spiritual greatness was no less extraordinary.

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Leaving Bellary, the *Mahaswamiji* encamped at a village called Belaguppe in the *taluk* of Rayadurga. Two adjacent, small mud-roofed houses had been reserved for the *Mahaswamiji*. One of these houses was for the worship of Chandramoulishwara and for the *Mahaswamiji*'s *Bhiksha* and the other for the *Mahaswamiji*'s religious duties and to serve as a place to rest. Tragedy struck on the night *Mahaswamiji* reached this place; thieves broke in and ran away with the costly items on which they could lay their hands. The box containing *Ratnagarbha Ganapati* and *Chandramoulishwara-linga* was also found missing.

When the *Mahaswamiji* was informed, he did not utter a single word. He rose, bathed and, wearing wet clothes, sat down in meditation, mentally repeating the *Lakshmi-Narasimha-Mantra*. Even as he remained in meditation, horsemen scoured the country for traces of the stolen things. The British authorities were informed and they assigned an Inspector of police noted for his detective ability to do the needful. The *Mahaswamiji* continued to fast and meditate in seclusion even as the days passed. On the fifth day after the theft, word came from the Inspector. That the copper cabinet used to keep the *Chandramoulishwara-linga* and *Ratnagarbha-Ganapati* had been found buried underground by a peasant ploughing the field. Thus the force of the *Mahaswamiji*'s spirituality and devotion, and the efforts of the Police Inspector resulted in the valuable items being got back. On that day, the *Mahaswamiji* specially blessed the Inspector, bathed at 7 o'clock in the evening and an intense puja that lasted all

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through the night and was completed only at 6 o'clock on the next morning.

It is well-known that the *Chandramoulishwara-linga* and the *Ratnagarbha-Ganapati* of the Sringeri Math were both worshipped by the great Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada and that they were handed over by him to his direct disciple Sureshwaracharya who was appointed as the head of the Dakshinamnaya *Peetham* and that from that day to this, they have been worshipped by all the Gurus of the Math in succession. It is stated in the *Puranas* that when Sri Shankaracharya was in Benares, God Vishweshwara appeared before him and presented him with five *lingas* brought from Kailas for his worship. Sri Shankaracharya worshipped these five *Lingas* and then gave one each to the four *Amnaya-Peethams* established by him for the spread of righteousness and gave the remaining one for worship at Chidambaram in the Madras presidency.

The *Mahaswamiji* travelled post-haste and reached Sringeri on Wednesday the thirteenth of the bright half of Magha of the year *Sarvadhari* S.S. 1812 (13th February, 1889). The first thing he did on his return to Sringeri was to place the *Chandramoulishwara-linga* and *Ratnagarbha-Ganapati* idol before the altar of his master's shrine and receive them back with his unseen blessings. The first tour of the *Mahaswamiji* had lasted about three years; he was now thirty-one years old.

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5. Second tour of the Mahaswamiji

For two years after this, the *Mahaswamiji* stayed at Sringeri, studying the sacred scriptures and teaching disciples who came to him for instruction in *Vedanta* and worshipping daily his own Guru and Sri Chandramoulishwara. It was a quiet life divided between self-improvement and instruction, after the time required for meditation and *Puja*. It was a life after his own heart. But his mission was not to do what was most congenial to his temperament, but to go about preaching the truths of *Vedic-Dharma* to the vast multitude of people who owed allegiance to the Math. So he resolved once again to go on a tour to those parts of South India which he had visited with his Guru when he was quite young and all preparations were made for the purpose of carrying out this tour.

In accordance with the usual practice, the proposed tour was intimated to His Highness, Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar. By the blessings and the grace of the Guru and Sri Chamundeshwari, the patron Goddess of the royal family, His Highness, the Maharaja, had been blessed with children and the royal family was a happy sight to see like

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the Gokula of Nanda. The Maharaja was anxious that the *Mahaswamiji* should see with his own eyes the happiness in the royal family and give his blessings. It is at this point in time that the Maharaja received with great pleasure, the communication from the Math regarding the Guru's tour. He replied stating that it would give him utmost pleasure if the Guru would be pleased to perform *Vyasa-Puja* and *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* for that year in Mysore and give his blessings to His Highness and the royal family before setting out on his further tours. The Maharaja also added that the *Dewan* had been requested to render all such help as was required from the Mysore government and to arrange for all such assistance as may be required from the British Government in British territories.

On Friday, the fifth of the dark half of *Jyeshtha*, in the year *Khara* S.S. 1814 (1891 C.E), the *Mahaswamiji* left Sringeri with his retinue and proceeded to Kigga, the ancient hermitage of Rishyashringa *Maharshi* and encamped in that place. The next morning, after performing the worship of Rishyashringeshwara and receiving His blessings, he left Kigga and travelling through Chickmaglur, Belur and Hassan, he reached Mysore on Friday, the second of the bright half of *Ashada*. The Maharaja received the Guru with all honours in accordance with the established custom and after performing the *Dhuli-Pada-Puja*, presented his children to the *Mahaswamiji* and obtained his blessings. The *Mahaswamiji* was filled with joy at beholding the love and devotion of the Maharaja and the happy royal family and said to the

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Maharaja – "By the blessings of our great Guru, your Highness has now attained complete living; for it is stated in the *Vedas*, "through children a man's life becomes complete". He then blessed the Maharaja and, leaving the palace, proceeded to encamp in the *chatram* (guest house) of Nanjaraya Bahadur which had been reserved for his accommodation. Here, he performed the *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* and *Vyasa-Puja* as well as the worship of Sri Sharada and participated in other festivities of *Dasara* season. All the expenses of the *Chaturmasya* during the two months it lasted were borne by the palace. During the remaining two months of the stay of the *Mahaswamiji*, the expenses were borne by other disciples. In this manner, the Guru remained in Mysore for a period of four months and thanks to the charitable distribution of food for all classes of people during these months, the drought and famine which threatened the country at that time were fortunately averted.

Mysore is one of the principal seats of *Vedic* learning. After the patronage of the court of Peshwa Baji Rao II was lost, the great pundits of that court found their way to the court of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, and being welcomed by that Maharaja, stayed there permanently. At the time of the *Mahaswamiji*'s visit to Mysore in the year *Khara* (1891 C.E), there were Pundits and learned men of the court, who possessed profound knowledge of *Tarka*, Vyakarana, *Veda* and *Vedanta* of the likes of Panditaratna Sitarama Shastri, *Panditaratna* Kasturirangacharya, *Dharmadhikari* Rama Shastri, *Dharmadhikari*

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Kumbhakonam Sheshacharya, Sundara Shastri of Pazhamaneri in Tanjore District, Tamugondlu Samacharya, Vibhagam Srikantha Shastri, Narasimha Ganapathi, Dwivedi Subbavadhani and others. A Sanskrit College had been established by the Maharaja and many of the Pundits referred to above were engaged in teaching *Vedas* and *Shastras* to their pupils. His Highness Maharaja Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV, the ruler of the State, was firmly imbued with belief in the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*. Very much more money was spent than ever before in the cause of Sanskrit learning and the maintenance of learned men.

The learning of these days is not a hundredth or a thousandth part compared with the learning of bygone days either in extent or in depth. Is this the effect of the time sprit? Or is it the will of *Ishwara*? The time has come where one hesitates to speak of *Vedic* learning as any learning at all. Even those who have learnt the *Vedas* and *Shastras* and have become pundits are forced to regret their folly in having devoted all their lives to such unprofitable learning. They now desire that their children should not follow their example and devote themselves to profitless *Vedic* learning. The contentment that was in the blood of the Brahmins seems to have fled. From head to foot men are filled with the spirit of restless desire and its mischievous activities. The power of the *mantras* to exorcise that evil spirit seems to have become blunted.

All this must be ascribed to the evil effects of past births by which the present generation is condemned to

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endure the manifold miseries caused by the tendencies of the present day and to no other cause. Everyone young or old is imbued with a feeling of egotism that he or she is the only wise being in the world, the only one possessing a subtle intellect and capable of exercising the faculty of reasoning and the only savior of the world! We have discarded the ancients who were contented and farseeing men of pure lives, free from all egotism. The *Vedas* and the *Shastras* that once occupied an exalted place have been set aside for the use of brainless people. A doubt however arises in the minds of some as to whether the decision of the present day was made after careful enquiry with such intelligence as God has given us or whether it is the result of thoughtlessness and folly.

The philosophy of the modern educated Indians seem to be as follows: - "In the search for happiness the one desire of all mankind, the one and only indispensible means is money. As stated in a verse penned by the famous poet Bhartruhari, "Whoso possesses wealth is the man; he is of noble birth, learned wise and virtuous. He only is eloquent and worthy to be seen. All virtues follow wealth."

But does this philosophy stand to reason? Is it possible to meet the objections that can be raised against it and to establish the truth of this theory? It is necessary to determine first the meaning of happiness which is sought after and desired by all. For the attainment of happiness determined by this inquiry is wealth, the sole and sufficient means or are there other and more necessary conditions?

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Happiness and misery are mental conditions and have no hard and fast material basis; nor are they the same in outward form for all human beings. Real happiness persists through all time – past, present and future -- and is independent of external conditions. Real learning is that which teaches us the means of acquiring such happiness. If we cultivate that learning, the happiness that has deserted us will seek us once more. The evil spirit of desire that has taken possession of us will flee away. We shall then obtain freedom. The human life that has been vouchsafed to us will then be justified. Modern learning, its endeavors and its practices can never be the means for the acquisition of happiness that is truly desirable. There can be no doubt that we have mistaken misery for happiness and are in a state of delusion, and that being unable to see the end of it owing to our confused state of mind, we are engaged in complaints, lamentations and restless activities. Have those which have made their best efforts for the acquisition of wealth reaped benefits and enjoyed happiness commensurate with their efforts? Are those who have accumulated vast wealth satisfied and enjoying happiness unalloyed with misery?

The things that are necessary for true happiness are desirelessness and devotion. If we give up our egotism little by little and cease to despise our ancestors and the works they have written and increase our faith and devotion, our delusions will vanish gradually, our minds will become pure; We shall become fit to seek the knowledge of the nature of happiness and its causes; and we shall be enabled to obtain that happiness that we desire and to shun the

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misery that we detest. This and no other is the way to accomplish our aim and experience true happiness.

What led us to this dissertation here was our amazement and sorrow at seeing the disastrous decline of the *Vedic-way of living* and the learning of Sanskrit in spite of all the conveniences and opportunities created for their development by His Highness the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. God almighty should bestow His grace upon us who are completely deluded and foolish, should teach us faith in the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* and should confer on us the inestimable boon of contentment!

The *Mahaswamiji* tried to stem the tide of inflowing materialism and keep the ancient ideals vividly before the huge crowds of educated Hindus who flocked to his lectures, drawn by his learned eloquence and inspiring personality, but the enthusiasm of the hour was forgotten in the daily scramble for the pelf. The *Mahaswamiji* did not fail to notice this; but he had a duty and he did it. He was conscious that he had to hold on to his mission bravely.

During the period of the *Chaturmasya*, in the month of *Bhadrapada,* an idol of Lord Ganapati, called Sabha Ganapati, was installed and worshipped by the *Mahaswamiji* according to the established custom of the Math. The *Ganapati-Sabha* on this occasion was even grander than usual; the *Mahaswamiji* delivered persuasive lectures on the burning social questions of the day. In the presence of the Lord, every evening, from four o'clock to seven o'clock, the learned men of the Math, the palace and

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the students of the Sanskrit College who formed the assembly, discussed knotty issues in *Tarka* (logic), *Vyakarana* (grammar) and *Vedanta (philosophy of the Upanishads)* under the guidance of the *Mahaswamiji*. These discussions between great Punditas vying with each other in their learning and capacity, immersed in an ocean of joy even those who were ignorant of the *Shastras*. On one occasion, His Highness the Maharaja Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar came to the assembly and was pleased to hear that the *Mahaswamiji* highly appreciated the learning of the Pundits. The *Mahaswamiji*, on the request of the Maharaja, spoke in the assembly for two hours on the subject of image worship. He clarified that image-worship was very much in accordance with the *Shastras* and that through it, one can please *Ishwara* and obtain His grace. He established this with arguments taken from the *Shastras* and illustrations from our daily life.

On Wednesday, the third of the bright half of *Kartika* of the year *Khara* (1891 C.E), the *Mahaswamiji* was pleased to visit the Sri Chamarajendra Saraswati *Prasada* Pathashala at the request of the Palace Controller to install there according to Vedic rites, an image of Lord Ganapati by the name of Vidya Ganapati and in order to confer special virtue on that image, the *Mahaswamiji* worshipped it with his own hands and blessed all who were present. At about 2 o'clock on the same day, the Maharaja came to the *Pathashala* and beheld the newly installed Ganapati; he also had an interview with the *Mahaswamiji* and after receiving *Tirtha-Prasada* from the Guru, returned to the

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palace. In the evening, the *Mahaswamiji* returned to his camp in the Nanjaraya Bahadur Chatram. The *Mahaswamiji* visited the Sanskrit College once again and spoke eloquently for three hours on Sanskrit education and *Dharma* in a manner that kept the audience spell-bound. The assemblage consisted of the Maharaja, the *Dewan* and the other officers of the State as well as the learned men of the court.

For four months, the *Mahaswamiji* remained in Mysore. By means of private instruction, public teaching and lectures, he eradicated the doubts and difficulties that perplexed the minds of the Maharaja and his people and increased their faith in the *Vedas* and *Shastras* and their devotion to God. Thereby, he earned the gratitude of all, young and old. He then proceeded with his tour.

On the morning of Friday, the eleventh of the bright half of *Kartika*, of the year *Khara* (1891 C.E), the *Mahaswamiji* carried out his religious observances in the house of Dewan K. Seshadri Iyer and set out for the palace at about 8 o'clock with all the State honours. Having arrived at the palace, he took leave of the Maharaja and the Royal family, after bestowing on them costly gifts and his blessings by means of fruits and *Mantrakshata*. From the countenance of the Maharaja, he saw that his departure had caused grief and agitation in the mind of the Maharaja who loved him with heartfelt devotion and who was one of his cherished disciples. He consoled the Maharaja saying, "It is rarely that an object of reverence and love receives our

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constant thoughts when that object is always near to us; but when it happens to be removed to a distance, our thoughts are constantly turned towards it." He pacified the Maharaja in this manner and convinced him that he ought not to take his departure so much to heart. He then left the palace and proceeded to a place at some small distance from Mysore on the Nanjangud Road called Chikkayyana-chatra. He encamped there for the night and travelled on the next day to Garalapuri, commonly known as Nanjangud.

This place, situated between the rivers Kapila and Koundini, is famous in the Puranas. It is fourteen miles away from Mysore, the capital of the Mysore Maharajas. Here, Paramashiva is worshipped under the well-known designation, Srikantheshwara, along with his spouse Parvati. It is stated in the *Sthala-Purana* (story about the sacred place) that Parashurama who had incurred the sin of matricide at the command of his father, set out on a tour and becoming enamored of the beautiful scenery in this place, desired to remain there for some days performing *tapas* (penance).

He selected a certain place on the banks of the Kapila for his hermitage and as it was overgrown with trees, bushes and creepers, he set about cutting them down with his axe. Suddenly, a stream of blood spurted out from the place which not only covered the axe but drenched his body as well. As he became greatly agitated and was reflecting as to what its cause could be, Paramashiva manifested himself before him in the form of a *linga*. What

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should have been the state of the mind of Parashurama, when he realized that he who came there to expiate his sin of matricide had incurred a much greater sin against Shiva! He thereupon attempted to cut-off his own head with his axe; but Shiva, full of mercy, manifested in front of him, stayed his hand and promised protection to Parashurama who was so full of devotion and assured him that he would always wear the mark caused upon his head by the blow of the axe in the form of a crescent moon. He also conferred on the clay soil of the locality, the power of healing wounds and stopping the flow of blood and informed Parashurama that if a temple was built in that place and He was worshipped in it, all sins would be forgiven and His grace would be secured.

If we consider the miraculous things taking place in this place even in this age of the prevalence of Kali, we cannot help believing the above *Sthala-Purana*. Some years back, a Mohammedan ruler is said to have sent to this place an elephant which was blind in both its eyes with the object of testing the power of this deity, and to have vowed that he would believe in the powers of this deity in case the elephant was cured of blindness in both the eyes within a stipulated time and that otherwise he would demolish the temple. That elephant was made to bathe every day in the *Kapila* River, and taken twelve times round the temple in *Pradakshina* (circumambulation) within the outermost enclosure; its eyes were smeared with a paste of clay and the sacred *tirtha* (water) from the temple. At the end of the stipulated time, the covering of paste was removed and it

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was seen that the elephant had regained perfect vision in both the eyes.

The Mohammedan ruler who was convinced of the power of the deity was pleased to call the deity Hakim Nanjunda (Doctor Nanjunda)! This story which is current at the present day is only one hundred and twenty five years old. We would not be justified in refusing to believe in a story of such recent date.

The *Mahaswamiji* entertained great love and devotion towards Srikantheshwara. He remained in Nanjangud for twenty two days and worshipped Srikantheshwara in a variety of ways and prayed devoutly for the welfare and happiness of His Highness, the Maharaja, and the royal family as well as for his innumerable disciples. He then left Nanjangud and travelling through Chamaraj Nagar, Gundlupet, Heggada, Devanakote, Yedatore, Hunsur and Arkalgud, he entered Coorg with the object of reaching Talakaveri, the place where the River Cauvery takes its rise. Many of the indigenous Coorgs are rich and prosperous. The principal temples and *chatrams* or rest houses are subject to local supervision by the Coorgs and the charities of the country are under good management.

When the *Mahaswamiji* visited the place, the principal residents of the place welcomed him with great reverence and love. In Mercara and Bhagamandala, the *Mahaswamiji* was provided with accommodation inside the temples and he and his followers were treated as guests of the temple authorities, while many of the prominent gentlemen of the

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place visited him with their families and worshipped him, bringing their offerings for *Bhiksha* and *Pada-Puja*; the *Mahaswamiji* greatly appreciated their devotion. The *Mahaswamiji* remained for three days at Bhagamandala, which is close to the place where the Cauvery takes its rise. He bathed at the source of the Cauvery, worshipped the river with coins of gold. From there, he travelled back to Pashchimavahini near Srirangapatnam and performed the annual *Aradhana* ceremonies of his Guru there. The Maharaja, Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar, visited the *Mahaswamiji* here one afternoon quite unexpectedly; he returned to Mysore after spending some time with the *Mahaswamiji*.

The *Mahaswamiji* travelled from Pashchimavahini to Mandya and visiting Maddur, Shivasamudram, Kollegal and Chamarajnagar, he descended the Ghats into the Madras Presidency and reached Satyamangalam in the Coimbatore district. There, in the large and beautiful Sringeri Math situated on the banks of the river, he encamped and performed his *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa*.

From Satyamangalam, he travelled on to Gopichettipalayam and remained there during the days of the Dasara festival. A rich land holder named Shivakkolundu Mudaliar was desirous of installing an image of Lord Sri Subrahmanya in this place, as desired by his father. He desired to have the image installed according to the *Vedic* rites by the *Mahaswamiji* and to arrange for its worship in the *Vaidika* method. Till that time, the common

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practice in the southern districts was to conduct the consecration and the daily *Pujas* in the shrines in accordance with *Agama* methods and not in the *Vaidika* method. The *Mahaswamiji* approved of the idea and sent the Math pundits to assist the local *Vaidika* priests to install the deity according to *Vedic* rites. After the consecration ceremony was over, the *Mahaswamiji* visited the temple and in order to confer special sacredness in the shrine, performed his worship and recited mantras.

He then left Gopichettipalayam and travelled on to Erode, Bhavani and other places, remaining in each place for three to fifteen days as desired by his disciples and helped men to purify themselves by beholding the worship of Chandramoulishwara, partaking of *Tirtha* and *Prasada*, and by listening to his instructions. In this manner, he was travelling for about a year in these beautiful *Agraharams* on the banks of the Cauvery.

At a distance of about 15 miles from Tiruchirapalli, on the banks of the *akhanda* (unbifurcated) Cauvery, there is a village named Ayyampalyam. There was a gentleman named Tandavaraya Pillai, son of Shanmukham Pillai, living in that village. He was a good natured gentleman. His ancestors had acquired extensive and fertile lands on the banks of Cauvery and had thriven by agriculture. It had been ascertained from certain inscriptions on stones that the ancestors of Tandavaraya Pillai had set apart a third of their properties for charity and had willed that the remaining two thirds should be divided among their descendents. The

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properties that had been set apart for charity were kept under the management of certain members of the family who were maintaining out of the proceeds of these properties, only one charity in the form of feeding Brahmin travelers who came to the village.

By the fruits of his past merits, there arose a desire in Tandavaraya Pillai to devote the whole of the properties set apart, for charitable purposes. As his family members were worshippers of Dandayudhapani Subrahmanya, he desired to build a large temple to that deity, to install an image there and to make suitable provision for the daily and periodical worship and processions; and this desire grew up in him. Learning that the *Mahaswamiji* had arrived in these parts and was travelling on the banks of the Cauvery blessing his innumerable devotees, Tandavaraya Pillai made up his mind that the hour had come when he could realize his wish. He was an intelligent and far-seeing man. He knew that a temple founded by him could flourish only if it was made acceptable to all castes and that if the *Mahaswamiji*, who commanded universal respect and had such a pure history, undertook the task of consecrating the temple.

With this object, he invited the *Mahaswamiji* to make a sojourn in the village. When the *Mahaswamiji* arrived there, it seemed to Tandavaraya Pillai that his God Dandayudhapani had Himself come there in the form of the *Mahaswamiji*. As this idea became firmly rooted in his mind, his desire to entrust the task to the *Mahaswamiji*

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began to increase. On the next day, Tandavaraya Pillai communicated his wishes to the *Mahaswamiji* and prayed that the *Mahaswamiji* may be pleased to lay the foundation stone of the temple with his own happiness-bestowing hands, before proceeding on his pilgrimage to Rameshwaram. He undertook to have the temple completed before the *Mahaswamiji* returned from his pilgrimage, so that the installation of the deity could also be performed in *Mahaswamiji*'s presence, when the *Mahaswamiji* came to Ayyampalyam on his return journey. The *Mahaswamiji* yielded his consent.

On Friday, the seventh of the bright half of *Chaitra*, in the year *Vijaya*, S.S. 1816 (1893 C.E), in *Simha-lagna*, the *Mahaswamiji* performed the worship of Sri Sharada and Chandramoulishwara and other Gods and having finished his morning religious duties, proceeded to the place where the temple was to be erected, had the worship of Ganapati and other religious ceremonies duly carried out and laid the foundation stone of the temple. He then conferred *Prasada* on Tandavaraya Pillai and directed him to complete the erection of the temple before his return journey from Rameshwaram and to also make suitable arrangements for installing in it an image of Vishnu as well as the images of Parvati and Parameshwara. The *Mahaswamiji* then proceeded southwards.

By this time, the occasion for *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* came on. Leaving the Cauvery, he proceeded to the banks of the Amaravati in order to bless his devotees in those

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parts. He carried out his *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* for the year *Vijaya*, in the village of Kozhumam or Varadarajapuram, near Udumalpet in Coimbatore district and after performing the worship of Sharada and the other worships connected with the Dasara festival in a village called Kadathur, he went on to Palani, a place in the Madurai district, sacred to Subrahmanya.

Palani is one of the most famous places in South India. A great many people come to visit the temple of Dandayudhapani *Subrahmanya* in this place. It is said that not a day passes without devotees bringing on their shoulders, loads of milk for *Abhisheka* to Lord Subrahmanya. The *Mahaswamiji* remained here for some days and worshipped Dandayudhapani and then proceeded onwards to Madurai via Dindigul.

The disciples of Madurai welcomed the *Mahaswamiji* with great love and reverence. In accordance with established precedents, the *Mahaswamiji* was accommodated in the *Kalyana-Mantapa* which forms a portion of the temple of Meenakshi Sundareswara. The Raja of Ramnad of that time, named Raja Bhaskara Sethupathi, a descendent of the ancient Setupathis, came there to visit him. With the object of affording to all the people of Madurai, a chance of seeing the *Mahaswamiji*, the Sethupathi Raja, took the *Mahaswamiji* in procession through streets decorated with pandals and festoons. The *Mahaswamiji* was seated in a golden palanquin decked with flowers. The crowds who had assembled to witness

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the procession were immense; all people, young and old, beheld the *Mahaswamiji* with great joy and blessed the Sethupathi Raja who was the means of giving them that happiness.

Learning that the *Mahaswamiji* was on his way to Rameshwaram, Raja Bhaskara Sethupathi, begged the *Mahaswamiji* to visit his territories after visiting *Rameshwaram* and stay in Ramnad, his place of residence, for some time and thereby bless him and his people. The *Mahaswamiji* accordingly journeyed on to his territories and after halting in several places, reached *Rameshwaram* on Friday, the fourteenth of the bright half of *Vaishakha* of the year *Jaya*, S.S. 1817 (1894 C.E). Here, according to the usual custom, he was accommodated with lodging in the third enclosure of the temple of Ramanatha. From the time of entering the Ramnad territories, the expenses of the *Mahaswamiji*'s camp were almost fully borne by the Raja of Ramnad. The *Mahaswamiji* proceeded to Dhanushkoti and after remaining there for three days and distributing charities in abundance, he returned to *Rameshwaram*.

From time immemorial, Goddess Rajarajeshwari has been worshipped in the palace of the Sethupathis of Ramnad. During the Dasara festival, special worship and processions were conducted by the Sethupathi Bhaskara Raja, with much splendor. On one of the days during Dasara, under the name of '*Sahasra-Puja',* there was a custom which had descended from very early times, of sacrificing one thousand living creatures to the Goddess.

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When the *Mahaswamiji* heard of this, it occurred to him that he should put a stop to this cruel practice. It was not the habit of the *Mahaswamiji* to speak out at once of what he thought about on any matter. One day, however, the Raja Bhaskara Sethupathi, came to see the *Mahaswamiji* and, of his own accord, mooted the subject and said that though he very much desired to put a stop to this practice he had not the courage to interfere with such a long standing custom and that, in case the *Mahaswamiji* gave him his support, he would stop the cruel custom at once. When Sethupathi Raja himself mooted the subject, the *Mahaswamiji* rejoiced greatly but as he was not in the habit of making any pronouncement off-hand in any matter, particularly with regard to established customs, he promised to give his answer the next day. That night, he worshipped Sri Sharada and prayed to her for an indication in his dreams as to whether he should or should not stop the custom involving cruelty.

The *Mahaswamiji* had a dream that night. A woman wearing a soiled garment and holding in one of her hands a drinking vessel and in the other, a broomstick, came before the *Mahaswamiji* and told him that she was going away. Sometime after, a married lady, wearing beautiful clothes and jewels announced herself as having come to stay. The dream gave great satisfaction to the *Mahaswamiji* and he determined that he should stop the cruel practice of sacrificing a thousand living creatures and substitute for it, a more humane form of worship.

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When the Sethupathi Raja came with great eagerness on the next day to know the *Mahaswamiji*'s decision, the *Mahaswamiji* narrated to him his dream of the night and said that he had resolved to stop the cruel practice and had been strengthened in that determination by the Sethupati's own wishes in this matter. The *Mahaswamiji* also instructed the Setupati regarding the different fruits of the *Vama* and *Dakshina* methods of worship and gave it as his decision that though the *Vama* method had descended from very early times, that method, which gave inferior results, ought to be abandoned and the *Dakshina* method, which gave far superior results, ought to be substituted for it. He then established a *Srichakra* at the shrine concentrating therein the divine power and installed Goddess Rajarajeshwari. The *Mahaswamiji* himself performed the worship of Goddess Rajarajeshwari and had the temple separated from the palace precincts and enclosed. He persuaded the Setupati to give a grant of land yielding about twelve thousand Rupees every year for the maintenance of the temple and nominated two priests from the Sringeri Math to conduct the worship. By these means, he established the *Vedic* method of worship at the temple and blessed the Raja and his subjects.

Raja Bhaskara Setupati of Ramanathapura was an enlightened Ruler. His generosity was exemplary. He spent fifteen annas out of every rupee of his income in charity and his income was quite disproportionate to his liberality. On account of this, he was greatly in debt and it did not seem likely at that time that the territories which he had

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inherited from his ancestors would be transmitted to his descendents. This became known to the *Mahaswamiji* and as the lineage of the Setupatis was of a very ancient origin, he felt it to be his duty somehow to save the properties from being lost. One day, when the Setupati came to see him, *Mahaswamiji* said to him "We are greatly pleased with the kind of hospitality and the devotion shown to us since our arrival. Your generosity equals that of Karna portrayed in the Mahabharata and though we do not deem it improper to solicit from a prince of such generosity any boon however great, I solicit from you the free gift of all your territories as Guru-*dakshina*(offering to the Guru)." The Raja's delight on hearing these words knew no bounds. The magnanimous Ruler rose immediately and made a declaration that he had offered the whole of the territories to the *Mahaswamiji*, as desired, and prostrated himself before the *Mahaswamiji*. The Raja was requested to assemble the officers of the palace and all the prominent persons in a *durbar* the next day.

The *Mahaswamiji* proceeded to the *durbar* with his followers and sent for the young prince to attend the function. In the public assembly, he then declared that his disciple, Raja Bhaskara Setupati, had offered the whole of his territories to him as Guru-*dakshina* and that he, in his turn, was bestowing the same on Raja Rajeshwara Muthuramalinga Setupati, the son of Raja Bhaskara Setupati. No words can adequately describe the happiness of the people who heard the announcement. They showered praises on the benevolence of the Guru and the

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wonderful devotion of his disciple. In this manner, the *Mahaswamiji* saved the territories of the Setupati of Ramanathapura. He only accepted, out of sheer compulsion, the grant of five villages bestowed by the Setupati on the Sringeri Math and earmarked it for the purpose of worshipping Sri Sharada and Chandramoulishwara on behalf of the Rajas of Setupati for the sake of their welfare and prosperity. In return, the *Mahaswamiji* vouchsafed a crown decked with gems to the Setupati, blessed the Raja and his family and then proceeded on his travels.

In the districts of Madurai and Ramnad there is a class of merchants known as Nattu-kottai Chettiars comprised of highly successful and wealthy traders. These merchants have made it their special duty to bestow monies either separately or in communal co-operation on the ancient forms of charities, such as restoring old and dilapidated temples in southern India, establishing choultries for free feeding in ancient places of pilgrimage and constructing tanks for storing water. They had chosen a holy man from among themselves and made him the Swami of an ancient Math established at a place called Kovilur who, in turn, gave them advices on religious and philosophical matters in their own vernacular. The Nattu-kottai Chettiars sent the Kovilur Swami to the Sringeri *Jagadguru* with a prayer to the *Jagadguru* to visit their places, and accordingly, the *Mahaswamiji* proceeded to visit their towns. He was welcomed with great devotion and worshipped by the Nattu-kottai Chettiars according to their varying degrees of

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wealth and position. On this occasion, the Chettiars made up their minds to renovate the temple of Sri Sharada in Sringeri and for this purpose, subscribed thirty thousand rupees as lump sum from their community and deposited it with the Kovilur Swami and through him, prayed for the Sringeri *Mahaswamiji*'s kind permission for the purpose. The Guru was greatly pleased with the devotion of the Chettiars and accorded his permission saying that if such was the will of *Ishwara* it would be fulfilled.

Wherever the *Mahaswamiji* stopped, he gave daily lectures on v*aidika-Dharma*, which was listened to by large crowds with rapt attention; they never failed to create enthusiasm for the teachings of the Scriptures. The lectures were instinctively adapted to the capacity of the audience. When he was touring in the *Agraharas* on the banks of the Cauvery, where there were still great scholars, the key of his lectures was pitched in literary and often technically advanced style, interlarded with quotations from the scriptures. In places where such subjects could hardly be followed or understood, his exposition of the *Vedic-Dharma* was pitched in a lower key and the truths were brought home by familiar and telling illustrations, taken from everyday life.

The words, the illustrations and the apt expressions flowed freely in a melodious voice. It was a spontaneous flow welling-up from the heart. All this may be within the reach of practised oratory, though the *Mahaswamiji* had never practised it. But it was not these that told; it was the

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personality behind all these that gave an indescribable value to every word he uttered. His very presence was an education. One cannot better describe this trait of the great *Mahaswamiji* than in the words of the editor of the *Mahaswamiji*'s work '*Bhaktisudhatarangini*', Sri T.K. Balasubramaniam, one of his sincerest devotees: "No one was ushered into his holy presence who did not go back full of noble resolve to lead thence-forward a purer and a more exalted life. To hear of him was a pleasure. To see him was a privilege! To speak to him was a real blessing and to be granted special interview – Ah! That was the acme of happiness which people coveted most in all earnestness. The magnetic force of his wonderful personality was such that one word, nay one smile or even one look was quite enough to convert even the most indifferent of persons into his most ardent and obedient of disciples."

While he was at Kovilur, the Raja of Ramnad wired the news that Chamarajendra Wodeyar, the Maharaja of Mysore had unexpectedly died in Calcutta. This news was a great grief to *Mahaswamiji*. He sent words of consolation to the royal family. Nearly four years had elapsed since the *Mahaswamiji* left Sringeri on his pilgrimage to *Rameshwaram* and Dhanushkoti. The main object of the journey had been fulfilled and the mind of the *Mahaswamiji* turned towards Sringeri, his abode. Meanwhile, the *Mahaswamiji*'s disciples living on the banks of the Tamraparni learnt that it was the intention of the *Mahaswamiji* to return to Sringeri. Some of the most prominent among them came to Madurai with a request to

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the *Mahaswamiji* to accept the invitation of the thousands of his *sishyas* in that district and bless them with his visit to their places. As the *Mahaswamiji* was bound to his disciples by love, he could hardly ignore their request and he promised to visit Tirunelveli. He only stipulated that as he could not spare much time to travel in those parts, it would be very convenient if the disciples from all parts of the district could be requested to meet him in Tirunelveli itself to meet him and also behold the worship of Sri *Chandramoulishwara*.

Accordingly, from Madurai, he entered Tirunelveli district. He halted in several villages on the way to Tirunelveli to bestow blessings on his disciples and encamped at a distance of two miles from Tirunelveli at the Sandhyamantapa on the banks of the River Tamraparni. After performing his religious duties of the morning there, he received several thousands of devotees who had assembled there from all parts of the district and in accordance with their prayers, he ascended the golden palanquin, on the river bank. As soon as the *Mahaswamiji* sat on the palanquin, a good many number of his disciples gave their shoulders to the palanquin. Such a spectacle was not a common sight. With music and the recitations of the *Vedas* and the wavings of *Mangalarati*, all people, young and old, helped to take the procession with great zeal and jubilation. The *Mahaswamiji* was provided with accommodation in the temple of Salivateshwara (Lord Nellayappa).

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His stay for some days in Tirunelveli provided his disciples of that region the golden opportunity of beholding him, hearing his sweet discourses and receiving his blessings. He then started for Bana Tirtha, where the Tamraparni takes its rise. He remained there for three days. As the mountains where the river originates are within the territories of the Zamindar of Singampatti, all the conveniences required for the *Mahaswamiji* at that place were provided by the Zamindar. At the time of the *Mahaswamiji*'s visit, the Zamindar was without issue. The *Mahaswamiji* who was greatly pleased with the devotion and respectful service rendered by the Zamindar conferred on him the title '*Tirthapati*' and blessed him saying that he would soon become a father. There is an ancient saying, which is as follows:

ऋषीणां पुनराद्यानां वाचमर्थोनुधावति ।

(What is (spoken of) quickly follows the utterances of the ancient sages.)

No wonder, the blessing of the *Mahaswamiji* bore fruit soon and the Zamindar became a happy father. The *Mahaswamiji* travelled for about forty days in Tirunelveli district and then went to Ayyampalyam where a task awaited him which was the installation of the image of Dandayudhapani Subrahmanya.

The *Mahaswamiji* was astonished at the zealous endeavours of Tandavaraya Pillai which had enabled him to erect a beautiful stone structure for the temple and to have all the arrangements for the installation of the image

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completed in so short a time after the foundation was laid. The preparatory ceremonies having been performed in accordance with the *Vedic* injunctions, the installation of the images of Dandayudhapani Subrahmanya, Prasanna Parameswara and Parvati as well as of the image of Lord Srinivasa was duly conducted by the Pundits deputed by the *Mahaswamiji* on Friday, the tenth of the dark half of *chaitra* in the year *Manmatha* S.S. 1818 (1895 C.E). After the installation of the images, the *Mahaswamiji* came into the temple, consecrated and worshipped the idols and distributed *tirtha* and *Prasada* to all the assembled. Since then, that temple has been greatly enlarged by the erection of *Mantapas*, enclosures and turrets. A large number of ornaments of gold and precious stones have been provided for the Gods. Worships and processions are being carried out regularly.

It has already been stated that the *Mahaswamiji* was anxious to return to Sringeri. He therefore passed into Salem district and then to Hosur and Anekal. While the *Mahaswamiji* was in Anekal, he received an invitation from several of his leading disciples in Bangalore requesting him to give them the joy of beholding him, and stating that many years had elapsed since the last visit of a *Jagadguru* to Bangalore. Although the recent sorrow of bereavement caused by the death of Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar made it hard for the *Mahaswamiji* to visit Bangalore, he considered it his duty to see the *Dewan* and other State officers, make enquiries of them and give words of consolation and advice to the members of the royal family. He, therefore, made up

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his mind to visit Bangalore. K. Sheshadri Iyer, who was then the *Dewan* of Mysore, having learnt about the *Mahaswamiji*'s intended visit, caused inquiries to be made as to what honours had been accorded to the late Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji* on the occasion of previous last visit to Bangalore during the British Commission days at the request of Sri Krishnaraya Wodeyar III; and having arranged for similar honours on this occasion, received the *Mahaswamiji* in the most appropriate manner. The *Mahaswamiji* remained in Bangalore for one week and gave interviews to the *Dewan* and the principal officers of the State, made enquiries regarding the welfare of the royal family and requested the *Dewan* to convey to the members of the Royal family such words of consolation and advice as were in keeping with his affection to the late Maharaja. He also gave to all his disciples in Bangalore the happiness of beholding him and his blessings and was contemplating his return to Sringeri through Tumkur.

Meanwhile, Her Highness Sri Kempa Nanjammani Vani Vilasa Sannidhana, the Maharani regent of Mysore, who had taken under her protection the administration of the Mysore state and under her guardianship the young princess of Mysore and was fulfilling her duties with great wisdom, sent an invitation through the *Dewan* requesting the *Mahaswamiji* to visit Mysore before his return to Sringeri and give her and the princes, who were plunged in sorrow, the happiness of beholding him and such words of consolation and advice as would serve to assuage their

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sorrow.

Induced by the *Dewan,* K Sheshadri Iyer, to undertake the journey to Mysore, the *Mahaswamiji* left Bangalore and arrived in Mysore on Wednesday the fifth of the dark half of *Jyeshta* in the year *Manmatha* of S.S. 1818 (1895 C.E). Both when the *Mahaswamiji* entered the city and when he came near the palace, his countenance which showed, in general, a quiet genial smile, was overcast with sorrow and this caused perturbation in the minds of all beholders. As soon as he came to the principal gateway of the palace, he beheld the two little princes awaiting his arrival; they seemed to him like divine brothers Rama and Lakshmana, who were separated from their father at a very tender age to protect the sacrificial rites of Vishwamitra. The *Mahaswamiji* went into the palace, saw the Maharani Regent and the princes and consoled them with the teachings of *Dharma* in a variety of ways. He then left for his quarters in the Sanskrit College as arranged by the authorities of the Palace.

Later, he gave *Mantropadesha* to the Maharani Regent and instructed her regarding the performance of *Shivapuja* and other duties. Leaving Mysore, he travelled through Pashcimavahini and other places and reached Sringeri with his retinue on Saturday, the seventh of the bright half of *Ashada* in the year *Manmatha* (1895 C.E).

The *Mahaswamiji*'s second tour lasted for over four years from 1891 C.E to 1895 C.E. During this tour, a number of gentlemen whom modern education had turned into

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agnostics, came under the spiritual influence of the *Mahaswamiji*, received *Upadesha* from him and began to devote a portion of the day to prayer and thoughts of God.

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6. Life at Sringeri

For some days after his return to Sringeri, the *Mahaswamiji* seemed always plunged in deep reflection and indifferent to his surroundings. He forgot even his daily physical requirements and his attention had to be drawn to these by his faithful attendants. Many causes contributed to this state of things. The late Maharaja was so attached to the *Mahaswamiji* by ties of affection and devotion that he never failed to execute the least expressed of His wishes. When the affairs of the Sringeri Jagir had once again got into some disorder, the *Mahaswamiji* requested the Maharaja to set matters right. The Maharaja immediately gave orders to his *Dewan,* K. Seshadri Iyer, to look into the matter.

The settlement of the *Jagir Inams* was immediately taken up and the rights of the Inamdars, the tenants and the *Peetham* were carefully defined; the lands unjustly alienated were restored to the Peetham; unauthorised alienations were prohibited at the risk of resumption. As a result of this settlement and the careful supervision of the agent of the *Peetham* and his faithful servants, the revenues of the Jagir rose from Rs.60,000/- a year, to Rs.1,30,000/-; the lands granted by the Raja of Ramnad yielded an annual revenue of Rs.8,000/-. The long-standing debts of the Jagir

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were cleared; gold and silver plates and jewels were freshly made at a cost of over one lakh of rupees. The *Mahaswamiji* himself never gave a thought to these material considerations; but his very presence was enough to inspire his agent and his subordinates with zeal and it was their fidelity, aided by the protecting-hand of the ruler of the State that had accomplished all these tasks.

Ever since the dismemberment of the Vijayanagar Empire, the fortunes of the Sringeri *Peetham* were carefully looked after by the rulers of Mysore and by none, so much as by the late Maharaja. His being taken away suddenly in the prime and bloom of life had contributed to the grief of the *Mahaswamiji*. The *Mahaswamiji* was intensely emotional; pity and sympathy would well-up from his heart at the least sign of distress; he would walk gently on earth, looking carefully around him, lest he should, by chance, tread on any ant or worm; he could never bear to see others suffering in his presence.

Once, when the *Mahaswamiji* was being borne on the palanquin in a grand procession in the city of Mysore, he saw an old woman looking at him intently and with tears in her eyes; the *Mahaswamiji* noticed this, in the huge throng of enthusiastic spectators and devotees, recognized in her his old nurse, who had taken him about on her shoulders when he was a child of two or three and fondled him on her knees. He sent for her, loaded her with presents and sent her home more pleased with the simple, kind words he spoke and the reminiscences of his child-life and her tender

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care of him than by the presents. He never failed to enquire after the comforts of one and all who came as visitors to the Peetham, though his confidence in his agent and the attendants was unbounded; he saw to it that his court pundits lived in comfort.

One of these, though learned like the other pundits, had a failing; he was very short-tempered and the servant who had been employed by the Math to cook for him and otherwise look to his wants was so much put-out by the treatment of the pundit that, one day, he abruptly left the Math, without informing anyone, and returned later. The Shastri waited till five in the evening, fasting and gnashing his teeth; but the cook not turning up, he staggered to the presence of the *Mahaswamiji* and told his tale of woe, hinting that he was dying of hunger. The *Mahaswamiji*, at once, left his seat and went in haste to the kitchen to see if the run-away servant was there. The agent who was inside the kitchen, superintending the preparations, noticed this unusual proceeding in alarm, caused the servant concerned, who was there, to get out of the sight of the *Mahaswamiji*, who turned back to his seat and sent for the agent.

Was not the *Mahaswamiji* aware of the failing of this pundit? Could he not have easily surmised that the man had brought the trouble on himself by his own short temper? Could not the *Mahaswamiji* have sent for his agent by a nod of his head and should he have walked to the kitchen himself, when hundreds of attendants were waiting

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to readily execute his slightest command? It only shows how tender-hearted he was. Such anecdotes may be multiplied; but enough perhaps has been said to show that the most characteristic feature about him was his tenderness of heart, which hastened to the relief of distress, without respect to the fault which might have brought about the distress.

It is needless to add that the sight of the innocent boy-princes of Mysore, removed from the strong hand of paternal control touched his heart as nothing else could have done and the first thing he did on his return to Sringeri was pray to Goddess Sharadamba, soliciting her to keep them from all peril and make them wise and pious. A couple of stanzas from this hymn are given below:

श्रीरामलक्ष्मणाविव सौहार्दं प्राप्य सुस्थिरं सुचिरम् ।
श्रीचामराजपुत्रौ जीयास्तां शारदाम्ब तव कृपया ॥

(O Sharadamba, may the two sons of Sri Chamaraja become close to each other like Rama and Lakshmana and achieve well-founded and long-lasting success by Your grace.)

भारति सम्पद्धरितौ बुद्ध्या चैवातितीक्ष्णया पूर्णौ ।
आयुष्मन्तौ सुखिनौ भूयास्तां चामराजसुकुमारौ ॥

(O Bharati! May the two fine children of Sri Chamaraja be thoroughly endowed with prosperity, very sharp intellects, long life and happiness.)

This hymn he caused to be sung every night, before the

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Goddess, at the close of the evening service. This brought him some peace of mind.

The *Mahaswamiji* had spent four years in travelling and had seen time after time the hourly increase of *Adharma* owing to the influence of the times. He had seen the decline of the knowledge of the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* and of the faith in them, as well as the obvious increase of the feelings of pride and egotism and absurd doubts and of the modes of life in keeping with these attributes of egotism and want of faith. He had also seen the miseries and calamities with which these evil tendencies had afflicted both the country as a whole and the individual souls.

One of the poems composed by him, '*Sri Sharada Stava Kadambam*', reveals his concern regarding the state of affairs that prevailed then; one or two stanzas may be here given as samples:

नास्तिक्यबुद्धिहतमानसवारिजातां-
स्त्यक्तात्मकर्मनिचयान्बहुशो द्विजाद्यान् ।
कृत्तोत्तमाङ्गजततीन्विनिरीक्ष्य दुःख-
वार्धौ निमग्नमिममम्ब सुखे नियुङ्क्ष्व ॥

(My mind is sunk in ocean of grief seeing a number of men, Brahmins and the like, who have spoiled their lotus-like hearts by a spirit of atheism, who have given up their ordained duties and who sport cropped heads. Oh my Mother, yoke it into bliss.)

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ईशोऽस्ति जन्म च विचित्रतरं हि जन्तो-
लोकान्तरं च निजकर्मकृतां सुखापम् ।
पापानि पापफलदाश्च तथैव लोका
इत्यम्ब लोकततये वितराशु बुद्धिम् ॥

(Oh Mother, quickly vouchsafe people with the knowledge that there is God, that births are varied (according to past deeds), that it is easy to attain worlds (like the heaven) for those who perform their ordained duties, that there is sin and that there are worlds that give (misery) the result of the sins committed.)

For about fifteen days after he reached Sringeri, he appeared to be not his own self. He never spoke to anyone. If any one came and prostrated himself and remained standing, the *Mahaswamiji* never asked him questions nor opened conversation with him. He would hastily finish his baths and other daily religious duties and would sit for hours in a lonely place with bent head and would take no interest in the affairs of the Math. It became necessary for other people to induce him to take his meals. Those who were near him and did not understand the real cause of the *Mahaswamiji*'s dejection began to entertain serious doubts about his health. After a fortnight, this dejection of the *Mahaswamiji* disappeared and he swung into action.

He wanted a Sanskrit College to be started immediately in the presence of Sri Sharada and arrangements to be made for clothing and feeding the students, both the local residents and those who come from

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foreign parts. In accordance with his command, suitable teachers in the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* as well as students fit to undergo instruction were secured and after duly worshipping in Sharada Temple and obtaining the favour of the deity, a Sanskrit College was started under the name of `*Sadvidya Sanjivini Samskruta Mahapathashala*' and work was commenced on Saturday, the sixth of the bright half of *Shravana* in the year *Manmatha* (1895 C.E).

The *Mahaswamiji* also commenced to teach *Vedanta* enthusiastically to some advanced pupils and completed teaching the commentaries on the *Brahma-sutras*, the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* which are known as '*Prasthanatraya*', in the next three years. During this period, he spent all his time in the study and teaching of the works on *Vedanta-Shastra*. On one occasion, the *Mahaswamiji* was enquired the cause of the state of mental dejection which prevailed for some days after his return to Sringeri and the reason for his growing enthusiasm for the spread of learning after that dejection had passed away. He replied that a feeling of sadness had come over him when he beheld the condition of the Indians of the present day; but that he had since come to the conclusion that it was impossible to put a stop all at once to the *Adharma* that was due to the times, that it was also useless to grieve over the matter and that all that he could do was to wait for better times, taking precautions to preserve the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* uncontaminated and spending his time in worship and contemplation to earn the blessing of *Ishwara*. He had therefore gradually overcome his dejection and

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taken enthusiastically to the teaching of *Vedanta*.

In the mind of the *Mahaswamiji*, who was thus engaged constantly in the teaching of *Vedanta*, the love of a life of solitude began to increase. It has already been shown that this propensity was noticeable even in his boyhood and that it had been restrained by powerful causes. A few years previous to this, the clearing of a bit of forest land to the South of the Sringeri math on the other bank of the Tunga River had been commenced on account of the wild beasts that had infested it and made it dangerous to the cattle of Sringeri. To this portion of land, the *Mahaswamiji* gave the name of Narasimhavana in memory of his great Guru. The land had not been completely cleared and there were no houses suitable for dwelling built upon it. Nevertheless, the *Mahaswamiji* desired to live there in a cottage built of bamboo and leaves of trees and he went there with the processional image of Sri Sharadamba on the morning of the fifth day of the dark half of *Aswayuja* in the year *Hevilambi* (1897 C.E). On that day, the worship of Lord Chandramoulishwara and Sharada and the feeding of disciples were carried on in *pandals* temporarily built for the purpose.

At five o'clock in the evening, the image of Sharada was sent back to the temple on the northern bank of the river. The *Mahaswamiji* kept the Chandramoulishwara with himself and slept with a few followers within the new area. Till then the object of the *Mahaswamiji* had not been understood. On the morning of the next day, he

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commanded that a few absolutely necessary cottages of bamboo and leaves of trees be erected, as he had the intentions of living there itself for some days in solitude. This appeared strange and inexplicable to some, though this desire on the part of the *Mahaswamiji* was in keeping with his mental attitude and the duties of his *Ashrama*.

From that day, the *Mahaswamiji* began to cast aside one by one all the regal pomp and paraphernalia of the *Peetham*. He discarded the gold and silver utensils, handed down from a succession of great Maharajas for the worship of Chandramoulishwara. With great devotion he began to worship Shiva three times a day, making use of only the pure water of the Tunga and the flowers and leaves of the forest. He praised Shiva incessantly by reciting verses addressed to him. He gave up eating salt, sour or pungent foods. After four O' clock in the evening each day, taking one of his followers with him, he would wander in the forests close to Narasimhavana or enjoy the happiness of *Nirguna-Dhyana* sitting under a tree. At six in the evening, he would return to his hermitage. While endeavouring to detach himself from human relationships in this manner, he still kept up his teaching of *Vedanta* to his pupils after the morning worship was over, till about 11 o'clock in the forenoon.

In the meantime, a communication was received from Sir K. Sheshadri Iyer, *Dewan* of Mysore, stating that in accordance with the desire of Maharani Regent, His Highness, the Maharaja Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV would

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in the course of a tour through the state undertaken before attaining his majority and taking over the reins of administration, visit Sringeri in order to receive the blessings of the Jagadguru. The Dewan requested that this information may be submitted to the *Mahaswamiji* in order that arrangements may be made for the reception of the Maharaja in a manner befitting the dignity both of the *Peetham* and of the distinguished visitor. The news was immediately conveyed to the *Mahaswamiji* with a prayer requesting him to return to the North bank of the river and take up his residence in the Math buildings.

The *Mahaswamiji* was immensely pleased with the news of the visit of the Maharaja. When this was made known to *Mahaswamiji*, and the agent solicited instructions in the matter, the *Mahaswamiji* said "You are there to receive the prince and his suite in a manner befitting the prince's exalted rank. Make all suitable arrangements and receive the prince according to the precedent of the Peetham. I shall remain in my hermitage and give my blessings to the Maharaja."

The Maharaja arrived in Sringeri with his tutor Mr. S.M. Fraser on Wednesday, the ninth of the dark half of *Kartika* in the year *Vilambi* S.S.1821 (7th December 1898). Being received by the Math authorities with all appropriate honours in accordance with precedents, His Highness and the European officers who accompanied him crossed the Tunga River and proceeded to Narasimhavana. He visited the *Mahaswamiji* who received him in a special pandal

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erected for the purpose and after the usual inquiries of welfare took leave of the *Mahaswamiji* and returned to the North Bank and encamped in a portion of the Math buildings specially fitted up for his reception.

On the next day, by the command of the Maharani Regent and under instructions from the *Dewan*, devout worship was carried on and offerings made at all the temples of Sringeri praying for the prosperity of the Maharaja. Brahmins were feasted and gifts of coins were made in abundance. On the next morning, the Maharaja proceeded again to the *Mahaswamiji*'s retreat and performed *Pada-Puja* with earnestness and devotion. The *Mahaswamiji* blessed him with a talisman for his protection from evils. Having obtained *tirtha* and *Prasada* from the *Mahaswamiji*, the Maharaja returned to his camp.

The respect for the *Mahaswamiji* that had arisen in the mind of Mr. Fraser by the casual glimpse that he had of the *Mahaswamiji* during his visit of the previous day, made him anxious to visit the *Mahaswamiji* and to have a long conversation with him. He communicated his wish to the *Mahaswamiji* through the Math authorities and was informed that he could visit the *Mahaswamiji* at about four O' clock in the evening. He came at the appointed hour and stayed with the *Mahaswamiji* till eight o'clock at night, the conversation being carried on through an interpreter. The simple habits of the gentle-mannered *Mahaswamiji*, the genial smile that was ever hovering about his lips, the melody of his words rich with thoughts bewitched the tutor

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and he forgot the passage of time. The high appreciation in which the *Mahaswamiji* was held by Mr. Fraser is reflected in one of the letters of Mr. Fraser written to the *Mahaswamiji* after the former's return from Sringeri.

On the night of the third day, a banquet was given to the European gentlemen who accompanied the Maharaja under the kind supervision of Mr. Carr, the Deputy commissioner of Kadur district. After the banquet was over, they witnessed the procession of the image of Sri Sharadamba placed on a raft and floated along the Tunga River. The Maharaja and the *Mahaswamiji* were seated on Asanams (seats) placed on the river bank and the procession lasted till about 2 O' clock at night. The European gentlemen present were greatly pleased and Mr. Fraser spoke on behalf of himself and others thanking the *Mahaswamiji*. The European gentlemen then returned to their camp. The Maharaja returned to his lodgings after receiving the blessings of the *Mahaswamiji* and the *Mahaswamiji* returned to the hermitage. On the next morning, the Maharaja came once more to Narasimhavana and distributed presents to the pundits in the presence of the *Mahaswamiji*, and after receiving *phala* and *Mantrakshata* he proceeded on his further tour. These incidents produced no change in the dispassionate nature of the *Mahaswamiji*; such is the very essential characteristic of all *Jivanmuktas,* say the *Shastras*.

Great princes used to come to him, wealthy noblemen with large sums of money for the Math, which they

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respectfully laid at his feet; poor people came to him in great numbers seeking help; also people who, or whose children, were suffering from maladies sought his aid, as well as those who came to display their learning and get rewards. He received them with equal kindness, showed equal solicitude for the proper entertainment of the rich or the relief of the distressed; each one went away with the feeling that it was he that had been foremost in the thoughts of the Guru. To little children, especially, who approached him, he had a soft corner. When great scholars, great *Yogis* and *Jnanis* came, he could talk with them on the most abstruse questions of ontology with an ease and flow that were marvellous and when he was talking with little children, he became a little child himself, delighting in their ingenious prattle and pleasing them with fruits and things they valued most.

After returning to Sringeri in the year *Manmatha* (1895 C.E) from his four-year tour in Southern India, he remained for twelve years in Sringeri from the year *Manmatha* to the year *Paraabhava* (1895 C.E to 1907 C.E). During this period, he gave instruction three times in the three commentaries known as *Prasthanatraya* to *sannyasins* who had renounced the world and householders who were keen to acquire knowledge.

Throughout the twelve years from 1895 to 1907, the *Mahaswamiji* was thinking of what should be done to check the drifting away of the people of the land from their old moorings. He sought the help of first and greatest

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master of his line, Sri Shankarabhagavatpada, who had found the land torn asunder by conflicting creeds and abominable practices in the name of religion and established peace, tolerance and a broad outlook in the country. The great master's image in the Math was placed in a conspicuous shrine and the *Mahaswamiji* arranged for an annual festival in his honour, commencing on the *Shukla Pratipat* of *Vaishakha* and ending on the fifth, the anniversary of the master's birth. In the mornings, all these five days, special adoration and Archanas to the image of the master, recitation of his great Bhashyas, lectures by the *Mahaswamiji* himself in the evenings in simple, easy style on the teachings of the master - the programme concluded at night with a procession in the streets of Sringeri with musical recitals of the master's life and his achievements. This movement has since spread to other parts of the land.

In December 1901, the prince of Mysore once again paid a visit to the *Mahaswamiji* at Sringeri with his tutor and returned with his blessings, before assuming the reins of government, which he did in August 1902.

Once during this period, a friend was deputed by Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya to invite the *Mahaswamiji* to Benares to lay the foundation stone of the Benares Hindu University. He regretted that he had to decline the invitation, the date chosen for the function being near and the time for travelling such a long way being insufficient. It was suggested that special trains or motor cars could be arranged for speedy travel and return. The *Mahaswamiji*

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said that the long established precedents of the *Peetham* had to be respected, that walking on foot had been at first the only method of locomotion adopted by his predecessors, that it was only during the time of Vidyaranya, the king-maker of the fourteenth century C.E., that the use of the palanquin and other vestiges of regal pomp and show had been substituted, that these signs of dignity had their own use in influencing people and that he could not bring himself to break the tradition which had the sanction of centuries behind it. Instead, he sent a pair of his Guru's *padukas* which, he believed, had greater power than he could ever possess to ensure the prosperity of the great institution which was to be established in the most sacred city of Varanasi, for the resuscitation of the culture of India.

His love and devotion to his Guru cannot be understood by the educated people of today, who are accustomed to look upon instruction as a commercial bargain. The hymns he has composed in praise of his Guru are sincere outpourings of his heart. The first thing he did after bath every morning was to take *padukas* which had been used by his Guru in his life-time, clean them with clothes, then place the *padukas* on his own head, uttering the prayer that his Guru's *padukas* were his greatest refuge in life. He would talk for hours on his Guru's greatness; and he never talked what did not proceed from the very depths of his heart. He had a strong conviction that the several images of the deities in the *Peetham* were living representatives of the Gods themselves. He carefully looked

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into the milk and sugar before he offered them to the God. He examined the fresh flowers that had been fetched by his servants before placing them at the feet of the Gods, lest they should contain withered or otherwise unworthy ones. It was not merely to set an example to the thousands who came to witness the *Puja*, but this feeling of reverence and attachment was instinctive with him.

His childlike trust in the symbols of Godhead co-existed with his capacity for abstract meditation. For days together, he gave up the external forms of worship and devoted himself to meditating on the Supreme. He used to spend a month almost every year, on the hill not far from Sringeri, known as Narasimha Parvata. Here he lived in a hermitage, a little removed from the quarters of his attendants and spent his forenoon in prayer and meditation. In the evenings he used to walk on the hills for two or three miles, alone. *Sannyasins* and others who came to pay their respects to him would stand a little aloof and follow him a little distance behind, after their prostrations; He did not speak to any one on these occasions but communed with himself and nature. Only, his bright smile irradiated the atmosphere around him and brought peace of mind to those who beheld him even from a distance.

That famous poem of Sadashiva-Brahmendra, *Atma-vidya-vilasa,* was his favourite work, which he used to repeat to himself. Oftentimes when he was seated among his pupils, he used to ask one of them to sing the verses of this poem in a sweet voice. For five or six minutes he would

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be listening; but after that he would forget himself in the rapture of Self-communion induced by the poem; his head would bend down and he would be in a trance. This has been noticed by his pupils several times. Once he was seated in contemplation under a tree in this hill; a wild hill-fly settled on his thigh and drank his blood. The blood streamed down; but the *Mahaswamiji* was not aware of it. The agent, who was standing by, dared not disturb him. It was only after he came to himself that he noticed a feeling of cold in the thigh and saw the mischief of the wild fly.

The noteworthy feature in all this was that his self-forgetfulness in the *Samadhi* on the Supreme Brahman was followed by his wakeful state by intense love of God, induced by his veneration for such outward symbols as the *padukas* of his Guru, the images of his worship. It was a love born of no earthly consideration, a love that seeks no return, an intense and ethereal flame that baffles all analysis, that glories in self-prompted and unquestioning surrender. This *Avyaja-bhakti* (devotion without motives) led to the Light and the vision beatific - in which the God in man and the God in the Universe are fused into one. Sri Shankaracharya says in *Vivekachudamani*:

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।

(Amongst the means to liberation, devotion is the foremost.)

This is not the lower sort of *Bhakti* which seeks human ends but the purest love of God; this was almost instinctive with the *Mahaswamiji*.

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The great psychic powers flowed of their own accord from such divine love goes without saying. Once in the course of his tour through Travancore, a certain poet of a village called *Ashrama* approached him with the prayer that his dumb boy should be cured. The *Mahaswamiji* felt pity for the poor boy and asked the man to visit him with the boy at Suchindra, his next camp. There he taught a certain *mantra* to the poet and ordered him to sanctify a vessel of water with the intense repetition of the *mantra* every day for three months and sprinkle it on the boy and cause him to drink a spoonful with faith. This, the man did; the boy's dumbness gradually decreased; he began to speak a few words and in course of time got cured. The Brahmin poet has referred to this incident in a *Stotra* of his, composed later:

आश्रामवासिद्विजराजसूनुमूकत्वविद्रावणपण्डिताभ्याम् ।
आनन्दसन्दायकवैभवाभ्यां नमो नमः श्रीगुरुपादुकाभ्याम् ॥

(Repeated salutations to the pair of *padukas* of the pre-eminent Guru that removed the dumbness of the son of the Brahmin livening in the village of Ashrama and confer bliss.)

The *Mahaswamiji*, however, never thought he had a part to play on such occasions. He would only pour his heart out to the Divine Mother:

मातर्बाधिर्यमूकीभवनमुखमहारोगसपीडिताङ्गा
भूताविष्टाश्च तत्तत्प्रशमनमचिरात्काङ्क्षमाणाः सुदूरात् ।

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आगत्याश्वेव तत्तत्प्रशमनपटुतां मन्यमाना जनेऽस्मि–
न्याचन्ते किं प्रकुर्यां वद तुहिनगिरीशानपुत्रीन्दुमौले ॥

(Desirous of a prompt cure people afflicted by major ailments such as deafness and dumbness as also those possessed by evil spirits come to me from afar and pray to me for relief under the impression that I have the competence to quickly put an end to these problems. O mother, O daughter of the Himalayas who bears the moon in Her crest, what am I to do? Tell me.)

याचन्ते नम्रलोका विविधगुरुरुजाक्रान्तदेहाः पिशाचै–
राविष्टाङ्गाश्च तत्तज्जनितबहुतरक्लेशनाशाय शीघ्रम् ।
किं कुर्यां मन्त्रयन्त्रप्रमुखविधिपरिज्ञानशून्यश्चिकित्सां
कर्तुं न त्वत्पादाब्जस्मरणलवमृते वाणि जानेऽत्र किञ्चित् ॥

(Devotees with various major diseases or possessed by evil spirits request me for quick relief from their great suffering. I am ignorant of the various means of treatment such as *mantras* and *Yantras*. What can I do? I know no treatment other than a little thought of Your lotus feet.)

He had unbounded faith in the power of the Mother of the Universe and of his Guru and he simply prayed to them and sent away those that came to him, with some holy ashes or some consecrated water in the name of the Mother or Guru.

One Hanumanthayya, an Amildar in the Mysore Province, had no issues; he came of a respectable family of long standing. He married a second time in the hope of

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progeny. But he got none. He was now fifty years and lost all hope of getting children and bequeathing to them his fortune. He now wished to hand over what he had, to the Sringeri Peetham, wrote a will to that effect and prayed to the *Mahaswamiji* to accept his bequest for the Peetham. The *Mahaswamiji* sent him back saying 'Mother does not want your fortune; She prefers that you should bequeath your fortune to your children. So please take the will and go back to your place'. The gentleman instead of taking back the will as directed, simply added a codicil that if he should get issues his proportion might go to them; otherwise they should go to the Peetham, and left it with the authorities of the Peetham. The man got afterwards three sons and three daughters and lived to a ripe old age. Instances may be multiplied; but it is needless. There are hundreds who have had personal experience of the *Mahaswamiji*'s potent blessings.

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7. Preparations for the Kalady Consecration

The *Mahaswamiji* was, all the while, painfully aware of the spread of materialism in the country over which his *Peetham* possessed spiritual jurisdiction. The remedies he adopted, however inadequate in his own estimation, were the establishment of schools for the spread of *Vedic* and *Shastraic* learning wherever possible and his attempt to create a generation of Pundits who could go about the country and combat the tendencies of the age both by precept and example. He established a Sanskrit *Pathashala* at Sringeri on which, as observed already, he caused to be spent annually, by no means small, (in the 1900's) a sum of Rs.12,000/-. He had about him a succession of advanced students, whom he trained, in the course of the twelve years of his quiet stay at Sringeri and sent in batches, fully equipped to fight the evil of agnosticism.

One other remedy, he had been slowly maturing in his mind. He believed that unless the spirit of the great master, Sri Shankaracharya, again descended on earth, righteousness could not be re-established in the land. He could only pray for the descent. So, why not do something more to help 'the re-descent'! Why not build a shrine at the

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birthplace of Sri Shankaracharya, and place his statue there, which would continue to be adored and prayed to, by hosts of sincere devotees and from which a perennial stream of spiritual influence could flow and flood the land? But the very birthplace had become a dim memory; still it could be identified by the description given of it in *Madhaviya-shankara-digvijayam*, an authentic biography on Sri Shankaracharya.

While these thoughts were revolving in his mind, Sir K. Seshadri Iyer came on a visit to Sringeri to pay his respects to the *Mahaswamiji*. The Guru broached the subject to him. Sir Seshadri Iyer was one who esteemed the blessings of the *Mahaswamiji* as greater than any other good. So, Seshadri Iyer gladly accepted the holy command, and in spite of his multifarious duties, he proceeded to Travancore and made inquiries regarding the birth place of Sri Shankaracharya as described in the *Madhaviya-shankara-digvijaya*. There, he learned about the existence of three different places with the name Kalady. One was near Thiruvananthapuram, one near Ernakulam, and another near Kozhikode. On enquiry and with help from the state officials, he found that the description found in the *Shankara-Vijaya* matched with that of a spot covered by Kuttanad (a low-lying area covering parts of Alleppey, Kottayam and Quilon Districts) falling in the division of Kottayam in Travancore State. And that was the village Kalady that he was looking for. He not only found every description mentioned in the *Shankara-digvijaya* applicable to the place, but he found that its intrinsic beauty was such

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as to make it worthy of being the birth place of Sri Shankaracharya.

The River Purna was flowing deep through this land and nature had lavished there, all the wealth of charming scenery. The *Dewan* then returned to Sringeri and made the *Mahaswamiji* fully acquainted with the facts. The *Mahaswamiji* determined to clear the spot all round of the natural growth of centuries and build a shrine there; but this would take a long time and involve great cost and labour. Meanwhile, a small patch of land, where according to local tradition, stood the village where Sri Shankaracharya was born, was cleared and a very eloquent and learned preacher of *Vedic-Dharma*, the late Pundit Nadukaveri Srinivasa Shastri was deputed every year to go there and conduct *Shankara-Jayanti* (the day marking the birth of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada), in the form of a five-day festival, giving lectures every day on the greatness and the teachings of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada. This continued for some years. People from the adjacent parts of the country would come to this place on such occasions and enthusiastically share in the celebration. In a few years, a longing was created in the minds of the people there to acquire all the land roundabout and build a shrine there for Shankara Bhagavatpada; but it was not easy to get possession of the land.

By this time, eleven years had elapsed since the idea of the consecration of Kalady first germinated in the mind of the *Mahaswamiji*. Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, who had discovered

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the birthplace and whose influence was very powerful, was now no more, as also Pundit Srinivasa Shastri. The *Mahaswamiji* knew that nothing great was achieved without difficulties. He simply bided his time. During 1905-06, Sri V.P. Madhava Rao was the *Dewan* of Travancore. This statesman had a great reverence for the *Mahaswamiji*, ever since he, as Deputy Commissioner received the *Mahaswamiji* at Shimoga in 1885, while he was on his way to Gokarna. The *Mahaswamiji* thought that this was a good opportunity for arranging to get possession of the land of Kalady. Accordingly, he sent his agent and *Dewan* Bahadur A. Ramachandra Iyer, to Travancore on this mission in 1905 C.E. They made known the long cherished intentions of the Guru regarding the consecration of Kalady, both to the Maharaja of Travancore and his *Dewan* V.P. Madhava Rao. Here a few words about the agent and the late Sri Ramachandra Iyer may not be amiss.

The agent of the *Peetham* then was Sri N. Srikantha Shastri, due to whose dispassionate exertions, the prosperity of the Math improved manifold. Brought within the influence of the *Mahaswamiji* at an early age of twelve, he received his education and training from the *Mahaswamiji*. He was found to possess an aptitude for management and the material concerns of the *Peetham* were entrusted to his supervision. The wisdom of the *Mahaswamiji*'s choice is shown by the remarkable progress made by the Math's Jagirs, in matters financial and in the improvements effected in the institutions of the Peetham. He would have made a name for statesmanship of a high

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order in other circumstances, but the training he received under his master and the spiritual inspiration he drew from him, led him to devote all his energies to unselfish service under his master.

His younger brother, generally known as Krishna Shastri, was adopted by the wife of the elder brother of *Mahaswamiji* in previous *Ashrama* (stage of life), Lakshminarasimha Shastri, learned *Nyaya* and *Vedanta* under the *Mahaswamiji*, became a great Sanskrit scholar and pundit and *Dharmadhikari* in the court of the Maharaja of Mysore. He was known as Mysore *Dharmadhikari* Kunigal Rama Shastri (his adopted name) and he and his elder brother had been bound up with the fortunes of the *Peetham* for about forty years. Srikantha Shastri was also a poet of great merit, specially trained in this branch of fine art under his master. Srikantha Shastri's lament at the departure of the *Mahaswamiji* and the ode on his mission to Kalady may be mentioned here for their sweet simplicity of style and elegance of expression. His poetical pieces have been published by the Sri Vani Vilas Press, under the title Guru*prasada-mahima-adarsa,* a mirror of the powers that can be conferred by the grace of the master, an epithet which shows that it was the master's grace that conferred on the author his poetic powers, his chasteness of thought and expression.

Dewan Bahadur A. Ramachandra Iyer was born of very poor parents at Panangudi, a village in Nannilam Taluk, Tanjore District — the only son of his father who

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had several daughters. His father, at great sacrifice, gave him English education. After the completion of his education, Ramachandra Iyer was first employed as a schoolmaster on a monthly salary of Rs.70/- in Malabar. He then took the B. L. Degree and settled at Madras as a lawyer of the High Court of Judicature. He soon rose to be the leader of the Bar and became distinguished for his forensic skill and learning. The Maharaja of Travancore requested the Government of Madras to select someone for the Chief Judgeship of the Travancore High Court. The choice of the judges of the Madras High Court unanimously fell on Mr. Ramachandra Iyer. He accepted this offer, though, peculiarly, he was a loser thereby, for he had a very lucrative practice at the Madras Bar and his salary as the Chief Judge of Travancore was far below his income as a practising *vakil*. But a Judge's quiet life was more congenial to his temperament. With his earnings as a lawyer, he had built a decent house in his native village, had purchased landed property there and placed his parents in comfortable circumstances. He himself had no children; but his sisters had many, whom he brought up and educated at his expense and he spent a considerable portion of his earnings in giving stipends to poor, deserving students.

Hardly had a year passed after accepting the Chief Judgeship of Travancore, when he was invited by the Maharaja of Mysore to accept a judgeship in the Chief Court of Mysore. He accepted the position and was a Judge till he retired. He had seen the *Mahaswamiji* for the first time in 1891, when in response to the invitation of his

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friend, Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, he had gone to Mysore where the *Mahaswamiji* was putting up in the *Dewan*'s quarters on his way to *Rameshwaram*. In 1895, when the *Mahaswamiji* was at Bangalore on his way back from a tour, Ramachandra Iyer had the second interview. He was a good and upright gentleman, with high principles and liberal with his purse in a good cause; but so far he had shown no inclination for any religious pursuit. The *Mahaswamiji*, however, was able to note his latent possibilities. He simply invited Ramachandra Iyer to Sringeri, where there would be greater opportunities for leisurely conversation. This, Ramachandra Iyer did at the earliest opportunity, when his heart was touched by the *Mahaswamiji*'s deep piety, his immense learning, and his simple, unostentatious life, amidst all the grandeur of his position. One visit was succeeded by another, till he made it a rule to spend all his vacations at Sringeri. Little by little, he learnt at the master's feet, till spiritual quest became his one, all-absorbing pursuit. He now wished to retire altogether from public life and simply waited for the master's permission. Three years he waited for getting the required permission and when at last he got it, he retired, though the Maharaja was loath to part with his services and thereafter he devoted himself solely to the service of his spiritual master.

Now to resume the narrative: Mr. Ramachandra Iyer and Mr. Srikantha Shastri went to Travancore and had an interview with the *Dewan*, V.P. Madhava Rao. They then went to Kalady and inspected the place. The River Purna

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was flowing by, in a clear limpid stream; the bathing-ghat there was held sacred by the neighbouring villages and people used to come and bathe there on sacred days like the new moon, the tradition here being that Sri Sri Shankaracharya bathed at this very ghat. Nearby was a shrine of Krishna, as also a Math belonging to a *Nambudri Sannyasin*. All the land about, known as Kalady *Sanketa*, belonged to this Math; but the *sannyasin* of the math had only *jennmi* right (the hereditary owner of the land, who traditionally could not sell it) - that of a land-lord and was entitled to nothing more than a fixed light-rent paid by the cultivating tenants who possessed permanent occupancy rights. It was not easy to oust these tenants or bring them to part with their rights.

Just at this juncture, came the Act of the Governor General of India, then Lord Curzon, for the preservation of antiquities and conservation of ancient monuments. Similar enactments came into force in the Indian States. The Government of Travancore acting under this Resolution acquired the land of Kalady, freeing it from all encumbrances in order to carry out the desire of *Mahaswamiji* to commemorate and preserve the birth place of Sri Shankaracharya and place it as an offering at the disposal of the *Mahaswamiji*. The Maharaja also sanctioned a sum of ten-thousand rupees for clearing the land of the growth of centuries and building a shrine there. The agent reported all this and the great generosity of the Maharaja of Travancore to his master, who, seeing that the times were propitious for the carrying out of his long cherished object,

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ordered that preparations might be speedily made for a tour to Kalady.

He consulted Sharadamba for a sign, for he never undertook anything significant without getting the Mother's permission. Two chits were placed, one in either palm of the image; the *Mahaswamiji* made prostrations at the feet of the Mother and waited for one chit to drop. That in the right hand was the first to drop and it indicated the wish of the Mother that the *Mahaswamiji* should start at an early date. *Magha-shukla-panchami*, *Paraabhava*, about February 1907, was the earliest auspicious date for the commencement of the tour and preparations for the same were immediately taken on hand.

Soon after this, the agent of the *Peetham* received a letter from the Private Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore stating that it was His Highness's intention to visit the *Mahaswamiji* in Sringeri before the latter set out on his journey and that he would be in Sringeri before the fifth day of the dark half of *Magha* and inquiring whether this would suit the *Mahaswamiji*'s convenience. The journey of the *Mahaswamiji* had already been fixed in accordance with the Command of Goddess Sharadamba for the fifth day of the bright half of Magha. So it was decided that the *Mahaswamiji* would set out on that day, proceed to Kigga which was the *Ashrama* of Vibhandaka *Rishi* and reside in the closeby *Narasimha-parvata* for a fortnight, then come to Sringeri on the way and give his Blessings to the Maharaja, who would arrive

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there to visit him and after that, proceed on his further tour.

The officials of the Math, as commanded by the *Mahaswamiji*, made all necessary preparations for the intended tour of the *Mahaswamiji* as well as for receiving the Maharaja in a manner befitting the dignity of the Math. The *Mahaswamiji* had become so accustomed to his quiet, contemplative life at Sringeri and Narasimhavana during those twelve years that he could not easily reconcile himself to the idea of parting from the Sharada shrine for a period of several years, for a tour, with a large body of followers, attendants and other servants, horses and cows, bulls and elephants, infantry and a small contingent of horsemen, materials and palanquin-bearers and all other paraphernalia of royalty meant slow marches, not more than say, ten miles at a stretch, halts at important villages on the way, long or short according to the circumstances of each case, so that the journey to and back could not be done under three to four years.

On Friday, the fifth of the bright half of *Magha* in the year *Paraabhava* S.S.1829 (1907 CE) in the auspicious moment of *Abhijit Muhurta*, the *Mahaswamiji* finished his religious duties for the day and set out from his residence in Narasimhavana with the images of Sri Shankaracharya and Sri Chandramoulishwara before him, crossed the Tunga River, went to the *Adhishthana* of his Guru, received his permission, went to the temple of Sri Sharada and after *deeparadhana*, performed his prostrations and recited some verses in a voice choked with emotion, which is worth

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quoting. It runs:

किं नाहं पुत्रस्तव मातुः सचराचरस्य जगतोऽस्य ।
किं मां दूरीकुरुषे देवि गिरां ब्रूहि कारणं तत्र ॥ १ ॥

किं चाहुराचार्यपादास्त्वद्भक्ता मद्गुरूत्तमाः पूर्वम् ।
औरसतनयं मां तव कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ २ ॥

आनीय दूरतो मां मतस्त्वत्पादसविधमतिकृपया ।
परिपाल्य च सुचिरं मां कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ३ ॥

अतिपरिचयादवज्ञा प्रभवेत्पुत्रेषु किं सवित्रीणाम् ।
न हि सा क्वचिदपि दृष्टा कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ४ ॥

कादाचित्कनमस्कृतिकर्तृणामप्यभीष्टदे तरसा ।
नाहं सकृदपि नन्ता कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ५ ॥

गुरुरूपेणाबाल्यात्सोढ्वा मन्तूंश्च मत्कृतान्विविधान् ।
परिरक्ष्य करुणया मां कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ६ ॥

जगतां पालनमनिशं कुर्वन्त्यास्ते भवेत्कियान्भारः ।
अहमम्ब दीनवर्यः कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ७ ॥

पापान्निवार्य सरणौ विमलायां मे प्रवर्तने तरसा ।
कर्तव्ये सति कृपया कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ८ ॥

यद्यप्यन्यानन्यान्देवानाराधयामि न त्वं ते ।
सर्वात्मिकेति चपलः कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ९ ॥

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यात्राऽशक्तमिमं मां गलितशरीरं रुजा समाक्रान्तम् ।
पात्रमहेतुदयायाः कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १० ॥

तव सद्मनि गुरुसदने विद्यातीर्थालये च बहुसुखतः ।
खेलां कुर्वन्तं मां कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ ११ ॥

त्वत्क्षेत्रनिकटराजन्नरसिंहाख्याचलेन्द्रशृङ्गाग्रे ।
स्वैरविहारकृतं मां कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १२ ॥

त्वत्पादपूततुङ्गातीरे विजने वने चरन्तं माम् ।
अनुघस्रं मोदभरात्कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १३ ॥

तुङ्गातीरे दिनकरनिवेशनिकटस्थले विपुले ।
ध्यायन्तं परतत्त्वं कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १४ ॥

तुङ्गातीरे रघुवरमन्दिरपुरतः सुदीर्घपाषाणे ।
कुतुकाद्विहरन्तं मां कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १५ ॥

जातु च नरसिंहपुरे तुङ्गातीरे सुसैकते मोदात् ।
विहृतिं कुर्वाणं मां कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १६ ॥

यतिवरकृतात्मविद्याविलासमनिशं पठन्तमतिमोदात् ।
कुहचित्तुङ्गातीरे कस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १७ ॥

शङ्करभगवत्पादप्रणीतचूडामणिं विवेकादिम् ।
शृण्वन्तं नृहरिवनेकस्माद्दूरीकरोषि वद वाणि ॥ १८ ॥

The following is the substance of this song: 'You are indeed the Mother of the entire Universe; but am I not your child in a special manner? Why then do you send me away

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from you now? Has not my master and your devoted worshipper handed me over to you as your own true-begotten son? Why then do you now send me away from you! You brought me here from a distance, O Mother, kept me by your side a long time and guarded me safe and now you send me away. Familiarity indeed breeds contempt; but is it so between a mother and her children? I am getting old and infirm; ailments are assaulting me. I was till now passing my time happily, visiting my Guru's shrine or the shrine of Vidyatirtha (Vidyashankara) or wandering at will on the heights of Narasimhaparvata, or in the lovely solitudes of Narasimhavana or quietly meditating on the banks of the Tunga at the large place near the temple of Suryanarayana or moving about on the very long stone in front of the temple of Lord Rama on the bank of the Tunga or sitting on the fine sands of the Tunga, reciting to myself the *Atmavidyavilasa* of the best of *Yatis* (Sadashiva Brahmendra) or hearing that poem of Sri Shankaracharya, *Vivekachudamani*. Why then do you now send me away from you?' This is the central theme of the poem.

Then the *Mahaswamiji* left the place with tears streaming from his eyes and continually looking back to take one more look at Goddess Sri Sharada. It has already been stated that the desire on the part of the *Mahaswamiji* to rebuild the temple of Sharada in stone was of long standing and that steps had been taken towards its realization. As fair progress had been made in that direction, the *Mahaswamiji*, when he came out of the temple after his visit to Sharadamba, laid the foundation

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stone of the temple, gave to the masons who had come from South India, *Prasada*, conveying his blessings and after seeing them commence the work, set out on his journey.

In accordance with the custom in the Math, he placed the image of Sri Shankaracharya and the metal box containing the Chandramoulishwara in the golden palanquin which had been decorated and placed near the outer gateway and walked for some distance. The inhabitants of Sringeri came there and with prostrations to the *Mahaswamiji*, submitted to the *Mahaswamiji* their feeling that Sringeri without him would be unendurable, and that they were afraid that they would not continue to enjoy in his absence, immunity from diseases and other evils. The *Mahaswamiji*, who could not bear the sight of distress of any kind, pacified them with his kind looks and kinder words. Many of the inhabitants begged the *Mahaswamiji* to enter their houses and purify them by the dust of his feet; and the *Mahaswamiji* went into the houses of a good many people and accepted their offerings.

That evening at 6 O' clock, he set out from Sringeri and rested the night at a village named Hulugara about two miles from Kigga in the house of Chennakeshava Rao, a person well known in the Malnad areas. The next morning, the *Mahaswamiji* accepted *Pada-Puja*, *Bhiksha* and other services rendered by Chennakeshava Rao as well as a donation of two thousand rupees offered by him out of his devotion for the consecration of the Kalady. The

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Mahaswamiji considered the unexpected gift of money as a good omen for the success of the undertaking and blessed Chennakeshava Rao. In the evening, he proceeded to Kigga and encamped there.

On the next day, the *Mahaswamiji* worshipped Rishyashringeshwara in the prescribed manner with offerings of clothes and ornaments and gave *tirtha* and *Prasada* to his disciples assembled there. He remained at Kigga that night. The following morning, he left Kigga and reached Narasimha Parvata, a hill situated at a distance of five miles from Kigga. There, absorbing his mind in Brahman, he became immersed in an ocean of bliss. He remained in that place till the fifth day of the dark half of *Magha*. On the evening of that day, he set out for Sringeri and arriving there, halted.

The next day, at nine o'clock in the morning, the Maharaja Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV with the Maharani of Mysore as well as His Highness, the Yuvaraja of Mysore, arrived in Sringeri. By the command of the *Mahaswamiji* and in accordance with the custom, the officials of the Math and the inhabitants of the place welcomed the Royal party at the entrance to the village with great loyalty and devotion and conducted the Maharaja, seating him in a Golden palanquin to the Math. The Maharaja alighted from the palanquin at the entrance to the Math and entered the temple of Sri Sharada on foot and performed his prostrations before the *Mahaswamiji* who was seated in the presence of Sharadamba. He then received *Prasada* from

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the lotus hands of the *Mahaswamiji*. After mutual inquiries of welfare, the Maharaja took leave of the *Mahaswamiji*. Again, at five o'clock in the evening, the Maharaja crossed the Tunga River and proceeded to Narasimhavana and had a private interview with the *Mahaswamiji*. The Maharaja expressed his appreciation of the kindness of the *Mahaswamiji* in having postponed his journey for his sake. The Maharaja had already issued necessary instructions to receive the *Mahaswamiji* in a fitting manner and look to the comforts of his camp when the latter travelled through his territory and requested the *Mahaswamiji* to stop for a few days at his capital on his way to Kalady.

It has already been stated that His Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was born as the result of the blessings of Sri Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*, the Guru of the *Mahaswamiji*. The Maharaja was an unexampled combination of all that was best in Eastern and Western culture. Brought up and trained by an Englishman in the best traditions of Western culture, he yet retained a deep attachment to and reverence for the hoary ideals of ancient India; his piety was almost instinctive. His life, in the midst of all royal pomp and luxury, was simple and sanctified by sincere faith in the scriptures. Withal, as the ruler of the premier State of India, he was administering his wide dominions with a political insight and ability that are fully marvellous, initiating great reforms in consonance with modern democratic ideals yet preserving the best traditions of Indian rulership.

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The *Mahaswamiji* blessed the Maharaja with the *Upadesha* of the *Srividya* and *Shivapanchakshari mantras* and presented him, for his worship, a *Srichakra* and a *Shivalinga* and also taught him the mode of their worship. The Maharaja then took leave of the *Mahaswamiji* humbly stating that he would await the arrival of the *Mahaswamiji* in his capital city of Mysore. The *Mahaswamiji* performed the *Mahashivaratri* worship in Sringeri itself. On the fifth day of the bright half of *Phalguna* in the year *Paraabhava* (1907 C.E), he continued his journey and passed through Kadur, Hassan and Tumkur districts. In these places, the officers of the Government rendered all necessary assistance to the *Mahaswamiji* and his entourage in a manner befitting the love and regard shown by the Maharaja towards the *Mahaswamiji* and earned his blessings.

A.Ramachandra Iyer, who had retired from the Judgeship of the Chief Court of Mysore and E.R. Subbaraya Iyer, a qualified and expert engineer who had been a high official of the Mysore Government and had since retired, were deputed in advance to Kalady to clear the limits of the Kalady *Sanketa* and build the shrines for the image of Sri Shankaracharya and that of Sharadamba. It would take two or three years for the *Mahaswamiji* to reach Kalady. So these two retired officials left Mysore in 1908, two years being considered sufficient for the work they had to do at Kalady.

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8. On the Way to Kalady

The *Mahaswamiji* reached Bangalore in May 1907. Sri V.P. Madhava Rao had left Travancore and was now *Dewan* of Mysore. At the request of the *Dewan*, the *Mahaswamiji* stayed at his residence, Patana Bhavana, at Bangalore. This city is also known as Kalyanapuri, a name justified by its salubrious climate, being situated 3000 feet above the sea-level and its prosperous condition. Madhava Rao, A. Ramachandra Iyer and other influential gentlemen of the place requested that a shrine for installing the image of the great master Sri Shankaracharya and a Math, where the *Mahaswamiji* could stay for a month or two every year and preach v*aidika-Dharma* to the people, should be built at Bangalore.

A. Ramachandra Iyer had on an earlier occasion, made a similar suggestion and had offered to place for this purpose, his own mansion at the disposal of the *Mahaswamiji*. He now backed up the request of the *Dewan* and offered a sum of Rupees twenty thousand as his contribution. The *Mahaswamiji* agreed to the pressing request. The *Dewan*, with his characteristic promptitude, looked out for a suitable site. Between Chamarajapura and Basavangudi lay an extensive plot, overgrown with trees and shrubs and harbouring venomous reptiles. The whole

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plot was acquired with the permission of the Maharaja, speedily cleared of all noxious growths, was laid into house-sites with a spacious plot in the centre for the proposed shrine and Math campus. The house-sites fetched good prices; a source of nuisance to belated wayfarers was rendered fit for a growing colony and a fair shrine arose in the centre, in an incredibly short time. The *Dewan* placed a spacious plot adjoining the shrine at the disposal of the *Mahaswamiji* for the *Peetham* and requested the *Mahaswamiji* to install the image of Sri Shankaracharya in the shrine.

The *Mahaswamiji* installed the marble image which had been intended for Kalady in the new temple according to *Vedic* rites on Friday the twelfth of the bright half of *Vaishakha* of *Plavanga*; he performed the day's worship of Sri Chandramoulishwara at the temple and distributed *tirtha* and *Prasada* to his disciples. As the *Mahaswamiji* had numerous disciples in Bangalore and as he had to visit them for *Pada-Puja* and *Bhiksha* in accordance with their requests, he was obliged to remain in Bangalore for a considerable length of time. From Bangalore, the *Mahaswamiji* travelled through Bidadi, Clorepal and Chennapatna, and reached Mysore on Sunday, the fifth of the bright half of *Jyeshta* of the year *Plavanga*.

There he was received by the Maharaja of Mysore with exceptional honours and later took up his residence in the Sanskrit College building. On Friday, the tenth of the dark half of *Jyeshta*, he visited the palace again at the request of

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the Maharaja, performed the worship of Chandramouleeshwara and other deities in the palace, accepted the *Pada-Puja* performed by the Maharaja in accordance with the established custom and blessed the Maharaja and other members of the Royal family. Although he had intended to return to his lodgings after these ceremonies were over, he remained the whole day in the palace at the request of Maharaja and returned to his camp late at night, after performing the evening worship. As the time for *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* was drawing near and as the journey he had undertaken was a prolonged and arduous one, he was able to remain in Mysore only for thirteen days.

On a certain day at about 5 O′ clock in the evening, some Mohammedan gentlemen of respectability and learning came to see him. The *Mahaswamiji* inquired of their welfare and began to explain the truths of various religions and the reasons for their differences. The enthusiasm of the *Mahaswamiji* grew as he saw the delight with which they followed his explanations given in a simple and reasonable manner.

After blessing the Maharaja and his other disciples, the *Mahaswamiji* left Mysore for Nanjangud. He spent three days in Nanjangud worshipping Srikantheswara and then descending the ghats through Chamarajanagar, he reached Satyamangalam in the Coimbatore district of Madras presidency.

He performed *Vyasa-Puja* and *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa*

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as well as the *Navaratri* worship in Gopichettipalayam, which is an *Agrahara* situated about fifteen miles from Satyamangalam. Travelling via Bhavani, Erode and Karur and spending a day or two at the request of his disciples and blessing them, he entered Jambukeswara (Thiruvanaikoil) near Trichirapalli.

While the *Mahaswamiji* was in Gopichettipalayam for his *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa*, one of his disciples named Kanadukattan Chidambaram Chettiar, who belonged to the class of Nattu-kottai Chettiars, had come there to visit him. He represented to the *Mahaswamiji* that he had renovated the temple of Sri Jambukeswara and Akhilandeshwari and requested the *Mahaswamiji* to be so gracious as to be present in Jambukeswara at the time of the consecration of the temple and the *Kumbhabhishekha* ceremony. The *Mahaswamiji* therefore visited Jambukeswara and remained there till the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremony was over, had the *Darshan* of Sri Jambukeswara and Sri Akhilandeswari and prayed at the shrines for the welfare of the world. He then blessed his disciple Chidambara Chettiar. Seeing how skillfully the temple had been renovated, the *Mahaswamiji* asked Chidambaram Chettiar to supervise and complete the renovation which the *Mahaswamiji* had inaugurated at the temple of Sharadamba at Sringeri, which task the Chettiar gladly accepted.

The *Mahaswamiji* then resumed his journey and arrived at Srirangam. He remained there only for one day,

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taking up his residence in the house of his beloved disciple T.K. Balasubramanyam. That night, after the performance of the evening worship, the *Mahaswamiji* went on foot to the temple of Sri Ranganatha and offered his prayers and prostrations to the deity in the quiet of the night, after the usual closing time of the temple, in great happiness and returned to his lodgings.

On the next morning, he left for Tiruchirapalli, where he accepted *Pada-Puja* and *Bhiksha* from his beloved disciple Ganapati Iyer and took up his residence for the night in the house of Krishna Iyer. He then stopped at Pudukkottai, the capital of the *Thondaimans* (Chieftains ruling certain parts of Southern India), which as the *Mahaswamiji* declared, had been sanctified by the footprints of Saint Sadashiva Brahmendra, who was the *Mahaswamiji*'s ideal of a perfected *yogi*. Then he travelled to Kovilur. The head of the Math at Kovilur by name Veerappa Desikar, who had prayed his respects to the *Mahaswamiji* on the occasion of his previous visit to the place in 1893-94, had now rebuilt a temple of Shiva and requested the *Mahaswamiji* to visit Kovilur for the consecration of the temple and the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremony; the *Mahaswamiji* accepted the invitation and proceeded to Kovilur.

After the *Kumbhabhishekha* ceremony, the *Jagadguru* remained in Kovilur for five days, celebrated *Shankara-Jayanti* with great pomp, accepted the hospitalities of the Kovilur Swami and then travelled on to places like

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Karaikudi, Kanadukaathan, Pullattur, Kottaiyur and Devakottai where the well known Nattu-kottai Chettiars reside. The *Mahaswamiji* thus gave them the happiness of beholding the worship of the deities and bestowed on them his choicest blessings.

As the time for *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* of the year *Kilaka* was drawing near, the *Mahaswamiji* remained for two months in Kunnakudi and performed his *Vyasapuja* in that place. Subsequently, He proceeded to Madurai, which is known as the *Halasya-kshetra*. He was accommodated in accordance with the established custom in the Kalyana Mantapa, a part of the famous Meenakshi Sundareswara temple and remained there for twenty five days. He then travelled on to Tribhuvana, Manamadurai and Paramakudi and reached Ramanathapuram where he stayed for two days and blessed the Setupati Muthulinga Rajarajeswara, the Zamindar of that place who was the son and successor of the Raja who had assigned five of his villages to the Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

Then, he crossed Pamban in a boat and reached *Rameshwaram* on Wednesday, the eleventh of the bright half of *Kartika* of *Kilaka* S.S. 1831 (1908 C.E). He remained for three days in Dhanushkoti, bathed at the bridge of Rama and returned to *Rameshwaram*. There, he worshipped Ramanatha Swami with silver coins and offered valuable clothes as gifts and remained for two weeks accepting the hospitality of his disciples in that locality and showering his blessings on them.

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He then left *Rameshwaram* and entered the district of Tirunelveli, on the Banks of the River Tamraparni. In this district, there are numerous *Agraharas*. The people there are devoted followers of the Sringeri Math. Having come to learn that the *Mahaswamiji* was journeying to Kalady to consecrate the birth place of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada, they considered it their duty to show their hospitality to the *Mahaswamiji* on such an exceptional occasion and became participators in the good work in which the *Mahaswamiji* was engaged. With great enthusiasm, they invited the *Mahaswamiji* to visit village after village in their district, extended their hospitality to him and offered princely donations. The *Mahaswamiji*, appreciating the zeal and devotion of his disciples, ordered that all the money collected there should be set apart for the erection of the buildings and *Kumbhabhishekha* at Kalady; a sum of two lakhs of rupees collected in that locality was deposited with some prominent disciples of the Math, who were residing in that place, as a reserve from which funds might be drawn as and when necessity arose.

A year had passed by and by this time, the next *Chaturmasya* was approaching. It being an intercalary year, three instead of the usual two months stay at one place for the *Chaturmasya* was necessary. Owing to constant travelling and living in the midst of crowds, the *Mahaswamiji* required solitude. The *Mahaswamiji* chose Papanasam for *Chaturmasya*. Nearby is the famous waterfall of the Tamraparni, known as Kalyanatirtha. The scenery here is grand and bewitching; here the Tamraparni

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flows in a pellucid stream of molten gold, skirted on either side by gigantic trees. By the side of the stream, is a holy temple of Shiva. The spot is enchantingly lovely and its solitude and loveliness were congenial to the *Mahaswamiji*'s temperament and meditative habits. Thereafter, he proceeded to the hills of Banatirtha at the invitation of the Tirthapati Zamindar of Singampatti. He spent three days at Banatirtha, the source of Tamraparni, on the hills of the Western Ghats.

The *Mahaswamiji* then proceeded to Tirunelveli at the request of its citizens to celebrate the *Navarathri* festival in that place. He took up his residence in the temple of Salivateswara and his disciples facilitated the conduct of the celebrations of Navarathri in a grand style and became the recipients of the *Mahaswamiji's* bountiful blessings.

When the Maharaja of Travancore, His Highness *Padmanabha-Dasa* Sri Moolam Tirunal Bala Rama Varma came to know that the *Mahaswamiji* was coming into his territories for the sake of fulfilling a great purpose, he issued orders to his officers to afford to him all conveniences from the moment the *Mahaswamiji* entered his territories and to receive him with highest honours when he arrived there. The Maharaja also requested the *Mahaswamiji* to visit his capital city on a day suited to the star on which the Maharaja was born, in the month of *Margashirsha* of the year *Soumya* S.S. 1832 (1909 CE). The *Mahaswamiji* acquiesced to the request of the Maharaja for entering Trivanantapuram on that day though it was not

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going to be convenient to him due to shortage of time. Tovalakkote was the first place of his halt in the territory of Travancore. When the *Mahaswamiji* arrived there, he was received by the *Dewan* Peshkar of Padmanabhapuram and was accommodated in a palatial building.

The *Mahaswamiji* went from there to Kanyakumari and remained there for three days, beheld Goddess Kanyakumari and travelling further, he reached Trivandrum at five O' clock on the morning of the appointed day and encamped at a place on the banks of the river at a distance of about two miles from the town. Before the *Mahaswamiji* could finish his religious observances of the morning, the *Dewan* and the other high officers of the State and the principal citizens had assembled and were in readiness with all royal insignia, elephants, *poornakumbham*, fruits and flowers to receive the *Mahaswamiji*. After finishing his religious duties, the *Mahaswamiji* donned his crown of gems and other Math regalia and came forward to enter his golden palanquin. Seeing that it was impossible for him to receive individually the huge concourse of people who had been waiting to have a glimpse of his Darshan, the *Mahaswamiji* informed the *Dewan* Rajagopalachari that the people could pay their respects mentally after he entered his palanquin and sat in it.

The officers of the state offered suitable explanations to the people and brought the crowd under control and gave everyone an opportunity of beholding the *Mahaswamiji*.

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While the *Mahaswamiji*'s procession was proceeding along the appointed streets, both the sides of the streets were lined with ladies waving *Arati*. Before the *Mahaswamiji* arrived at the entrance of the fort, the Maharaja, decorated in gorgeous apparel, was waiting with a small select retinue. As soon as the palanquin came near the outer gateway, the Maharaja came out of the fort, offered his prostrations and with folded hands made enquiries regarding the welfare of the *Mahaswamiji*. The *Mahaswamiji* was delighted at the love and devotion shown by the Maharaja and after inquiries of mutual welfare, gave *phala* and *Mantrakshata* to the Maharaja and blessed him. The Maharaja then took leave of the *Mahaswamiji* who then entered the fort and passed in procession through the four principal streets and after the *Dhuli-Pada-Puja* and other services had been offered in the *Yuvaraja's* palace which had been fitted up for his reception, accorded his permission to the officers and citizens who had accompanied him to return to their homes. Thereafter, the *Mahaswamiji* performed his midday religious ceremonies.

The *Mahaswamiji* remained in Trivandrum for eight days. The arrangements made by the Maharaja for the convenience of the *Mahaswamiji* were excellent. On a certain day, the Maharaja came to the *Mahaswamiji*'s place of residence, received *Mantropadesha* from him and also made a gift of ten thousand rupees as offering to the *Mahaswamiji*. When the Maharaja represented to the *Mahaswamiji* that he was growing old and regretted that in

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his state there was no one on whom he could confer the office of Yuvaraja, a heir apparent, the *Mahaswamiji* blessed the Maharaja saying that he would soon find a heir apparent and that the Maharaja would confer the office on the selected person with his own hands. That afternoon, the Maharaja was pleased to say that he fully entertained the belief that the *Mahaswamiji* was no other than Sri Padmanabha, the titular deity of the Royal family, and that as he possessed the blessings of such a *Mahaswamiji*, no evil could happen to him.

On the next day, the Maharaja sent the Maharani to visit the *Mahaswamiji* and receive his blessings. Her Highness too had the happiness of beholding the *Mahaswamiji* and became the recipient of his invaluable blessings. The Maharani received *Upadesha* from him and had his portrait painted by one of the artists in the state. The portrait is now preserved in the Shankara Math at Bangalore in commemoration of the *Mahaswamiji*. When the *Mahaswamiji* was in Trivandrum, a large number of his disciples in that place tried to invite the *Mahaswamiji* to their houses to serve him with *Pada-Puja* and other forms of worship and to earn his blessings; but as the Maharaja deemed that, it would cause inconvenience to the *Mahaswamiji*, he directed that devotees could come to the Math and worship the *Mahaswamiji* and receive his blessings. The Maharaja submitted to the *Mahaswamiji* that he considered it his good fortune that the *Mahaswamiji* had undertaken the great task of consecrating the temples at Kalady during his lifetime, as he was glad that he could

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also associate himself with it. He also expressed his readiness to provide all facilities for the purpose and made a gift to the *Mahaswamiji* of a further sum of ten thousand rupees and an elephant named Padmanabha. The *Mahaswamiji* showered his blessings on the Maharaja, his followers as well as on the inhabitants of the place and proceeded towards Kalady.

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9. *The Great Consecration at Kalady*

Sri Ramachandra Iyer who had been deputed by the *Mahaswamiji* for supervising the clearance of the forest land at Kalady and the construction of the temple there accomplished the work in two years with the support of an Engineer Sri E. R. Subbaraya Iyer. At first, it was the *Mahaswamiji*'s intention to erect only one temple and install the image of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada in it. Then, as though inspired by Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada himself who showed even after his renunciation of the world, his love and reverence for his mother, the *Mahaswamiji* decided that another temple should be built and the idol of Divine Mother Goddess Sri Sharadamba should be installed in it. Ramachandra Iyer was informed of this.

Two shrines, compact, strong and beautiful, were constructed in accordance to the designs furnished by Sri E.R. Subbaraya Iyer under the direction of the *Mahaswamiji*. Both these temples stand on the north bank of the Purna River and face south. As the Purna River flows between the high river banks, a beautiful and broad flight of thirty two steps made of granite slabs was built at considerable expense. To the east of the temples and

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outside of their enclosure, a house was built for the residence of the *Mahaswamiji* and the accommodation of visitors. Sri Ramachandra Iyer was able to complete the two temples and the Math house before the *Mahaswamiji* arrived at Kalady while the agent arrived in advance to make preparations for the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremony.

Kalady was then a small and thinly populated village. It was in a corner of Travancore and there were no large villages surrounding it either. In these circumstances, one can easily imagine the difficulties one would experience in making suitable arrangements for the reception of such a large concourse of people as would come there to attend the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremony. However, by the blessings of the *Mahaswamiji*, some three hundred labourers from Kallidaikurichi in Tirunvelveli district came over to help the cause and so they stayed in Kalady for this purpose. To supervise the work of these men, there were others who also came from the same place. The money required for the work had already been collected and was held in readiness at Tirunelveli.

For the accommodation of the thousands of visitors to the shrine who were expected at the time of consecration, six hundred temporary lodgings were put up in rows, with paths between. Lodgings of a comparatively more permanent kind were arranged for respectable officials and other gentlemen who were expected to come. The Sanitary Commissioner of the Travancore State, the District Medical Officer, Police officials, the officials of the Postal Depart-

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ment were all there in time to see that the sanitary and other arrangements made for the comfort of the crowd of expected visitors were satisfactory. The *Peshkar* of Kottayam division was also there with his subordinates; all the lodgings were provided with cooking and vessels needed for the use of the occupants; provisions and other materials were stocked on a liberal scale. Persons were deputed to receive visitors at the Railway station and to provide conveyances for them to proceed to Kalady as well as to provide them with accommodation and food supplies after their arrival at Kalady.

The twelfth day of the bright half of *Magha*, in the year *Soumya* (February, 1910 C.E), was fixed for the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremony and invitations were issued to all the disciples of the Math as well as to the heads of various other Maths and the Maharajas. About one hundred of the *Mahaswamiji*'s disciples who were students, lawyers and others had arrived in Kalady and held themselves in readiness to serve as volunteers of various ranks and grades.

The *Mahaswamiji*, travelling by the appointed route, came and encamped at a village called Perumbavur on the Southern bank of the Purna River at a distance of five miles from Kalady. That night, while the *Mahaswamiji* was sleeping, he dreamt that he saw a widow clad in white. When inquiries were made regarding her identity and place of abode, she smiled and replied that she lived underneath a tree and had come to invite the *Mahaswamiji* to Kalady

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and then she disappeared. The *Mahaswamiji* woke up and however hard he tried to interpret this dream, he failed to find an explanation. On the afternoon of the next day, Mr. Ramachandra Iyer and the agent went from Kalady to Perumbavur and reported to the *Mahaswamiji* that all the arrangements were complete. The *Mahaswamiji*, without concerning himself with any other matter, began to ask questions regarding the topography of Kalady and the site on which the temples of Sri Sharada and Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada were built.

As directed by the *Mahaswamiji*, the agent gave a detailed description of the shrines, the Math and other sites. In the course of the description, the agent stated that near the shrine of Sharadamba, there was an Asoka tree, under which, it was stated, the mother of the great teacher Shankara Bhagavatpada had been cremated; that people from the surrounding parts used to circumambulate the tree and make prostrations and light lamps . When the agent was relating this, the *Mahaswamiji* fell into an ecstasy; his eyes were brimming with tears; his body was in a tremor. With a voice choked with emotion, he began to recite verses in praise of Shankara Bhagavatpada's mother. Not knowing the cause of this sudden emotion, the people about him stood spellbound.

After a while, the *Mahaswamiji* came to himself and said that on the first night of his arrival at Perumbavur, an elderly widow, dressed in white, appeared before him in a dream and when questioned, she stated that she was living

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under a tree at Kalady and with a winning smile added that she now appeared to welcome him to the place. The *Mahaswamiji* felt great joy at having been invited by the mother of the great Shankara Bhagavatpada to enter Kalady. He was satisfied with the arrangements that had been made for the ceremonies and informed the agent and Sri Ramachandra Iyer that he would be in Kalady the next morning and gave them leave to return to Kalady.

At eight O' clock in the morning of the *Shuklapaksha Dvitiya Magha*, ten days before the date appointed for the consecration, the *Mahaswamiji* arrived at Kalady. As soon as he crossed the Purna River and came to the north bank, he went in a *Pradakshina* (circumambulation) round the spot where the Shankara Bhagavatpada's mother was cremated and performed his prostration and stood there for some time contemplating in his mind the glorious life of the great Shankara Bhagavatpada. He then proceeded to his place of residence. After his bath and the daily religious observances were over, he came out at about four O' clock in the evening and inspected the arrangements. He saw the temples ready for the installation, the rows of cottages intended to serve as places of residence for his disciples who would come to witness the ceremonies, the collections of food grains and other articles intended for the feasting of people and the lighting arrangements and being satisfied, returned to his lodgings. He complimented his followers saying that by the blessings of Sri Shankarabhagavatpada, all the arrangements were more satisfactory than he had expected and that he firmly believed that the forthcoming

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function was going to be a great success.

An extensive *Yagna-Mantapa* (the enclosure for the *Vedic* rituals) had been erected between the two temples for the performance of the sacrifices in connection with the installations. Pundits and *Ritwiks* (priests) had arrived from Sringeri and Mysore. For the supervision of these ceremonies were deputed Kunigal Rama Shastri, the Math Pundit, Dharmasila Krishnaswamy Iyer of Tirunelveli District and others. Images of Sri Sharadamba and Sri Shankarabhagavatpada made of *panchaloha* (an alloy of five metals) in Karaikudi in exact resemblance of the images in the Sringeri Math had already arrived. The stone images of the seven Goddesses (Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaarahi, Indrani and Chamunda) intended to decorate the outside walls of the shrine of Goddesss Sharadamba were also ready. The gilt turrets procured from Tirunelveli through Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer were also in readiness.

On the morning of Monday, the fifth of the bright half of *Magha*, the *Mahaswamiji* came into the sacrificial enclosure and beheld the commencement of the sacrifices. The *Mahaswamiji* instructed the Pundits and the *Ritwiks* to perform all the rites as prescribed in the scriptures to earn the blessings of the almighty and the *Adi-guru* (the first preceptor) Shankara Bhagavatpada. After blessing the disciples, he returned to his abode.

From that day onwards, the various ceremonies such as *Jaladhivasa*, *Dhanyadhivasa* and *Shayyadhivasa* (certain

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preparatory rituals for the idols before they are consecrated) and the various sacrifices were conducted for seven nights and the ceremony of the installation of the images was performed in the *Abhijin-Muhurta* on Monday, the *Magha-Shukla-Dwadashi* (twelfth of the bright half of *Magha*), of the year *Soumya*, (21st February 1910 C.E). After the installation was over, the *Mahaswamiji* came to the temples and after worshipping the idols, distributed *Prasada* to the assembled disciples and blessed them.

To witness the ceremony, the disciples of the *Mahaswamiji*, some fifty thousand in number from all over the country, had assembled at Kalady. The feeding of the devotees took place from 8 o'clock in the morning till 2 o'clock in the afternoon. At four o'clock in the evening, the *Mahaswamiji* took his seat in the extensive courtyard in front of the Math and expounded the nature of *Dharma*, the modes of observing Dharma and the benefits that accrued from it, the greatness of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada, the blessings conferred on the world by him and related matters to the huge gathering. He also pointed out that as it was for the welfare of the world that he had undertaken the installation of the images, it behoved his disciples to visit the place from time to time and purify their minds by beholding the worship of the images and earn their salvation.

The Swami thanked A. Ramachandra Iyer and his expert assistant E. R. Subbaraya Iyer for their untiring and dispassionate work in making the whole thing go off so

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splendidly and showered his blessings on them. The former, he honoured with the title of Guru-*Bhakta-Kesari.* Sri T.K. Balasubrahmanyam of the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, who had spent a fortune on the *deluxe* Edition of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada's works had ten volumes ready on this occasion and placed them in the presence of the *Mahaswamiji*, who blessed him with the title of Guru-*Bhakta-Shikhamani* and hoped that the remaining ten volumes would soon be published for the benefit of the mankind.

The audience in the front hall of the Math was grand and was suitable to the memorable occasion. Among those assembled there on that day were head of the Shivaganga Math Sri Subrahmanyabhinava Sacchidananda Bharati Swami, Sri V.P. Madhava Rao, retired *Dewan* of Travancore, Sri P. Rajagopalachari, the *Dewan* of Travancore, Sri H.V.Nanjundayya, Member of the State council, Mysore, Mahamahopadyaya Hari Shastri and many other prominent persons. After the task on which the *Mahaswamiji* had embarked was completed, all the learned men who had come there were rewarded with gifts suited to their learning and position in life and all the poor people who had assembled were liberally fed and given gifts of money and clothes. And after receiving *Tirtha* and *Prasada*, the devotees dispersed.

In order that the installed images may be fully endowed with divine power and an example of devotion may be set to his disciples, the *Mahaswamiji* remained in

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Kalady for three months enjoying great happiness, spending his mornings in offering special worship at the new shrines and giving discourses on *Dharma* in the evenings.

The Maharaja of Cochin visited Kalady during this period, beheld the image of the Sri Shankarabhagavatpada, worshipped the *Mahaswamiji* and obtained his blessings. He was a very great Sanskrit scholar; in Logic and *Vedanta* he could exchange swords - the sword of the tongue - with the greatest pundits of the day; in the presence of the *Mahaswamiji,* he held learned disputations with the pundits of the Math; the *Mahaswamiji,* Himself an eminent scholar in Vedas and Shastras, presided with joy and electrified the audience with his learned discussions and illuminating discourses.

Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, Maharaja of Mysore, a devoted disciple of the *Mahaswamiji* came with a small and select retinue to have *darshan* of the newly consecrated temple of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada as well as to see the *Mahaswamiji.* His Highness presented the deities with valuable cloths and jewels. He remained for three days as the guest of the Math. The *Mahaswamiji* blessed the *Maharaja* with the title '*Dharma-mula'.* Receiving the blessings of the *Mahaswamiji,* he left for his dominions. Many other disciples of the *Mahaswamiji* came to him when he was residing in the solitude of Kalady and became the recipients of his blessings. The place was improved from day to day by the indefatigable exertions of

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Ramachandra Iyer; a school for advanced studies in Sanskrit was started. The *Mahaswamiji* set out on his return journey to Sringeri.

After leaving Kalady, the *Mahaswamiji* entered Cochin and at the request of Sri P.R. Sundara Iyer, High court Judge of Madras, proceeded to the latter's native place named Pudukode and remained there for five days. Having celebrated the *Shankara-Jayanti* in Pudukode, he went to the city of Coimbatore and from there, to Namakkal. He reached Ayyampalayam on the banks of the Cauvery for his *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* of the year *Sadharana*.

The *Mahaswamiji* had arrived at Ayyampalayam on the *Krishnapaksha Dwadashi* of *Magha* of the year *Plavanga*, in the earlier part of his present tour and had remained here for one month. Thandavaraya Pillai, a Mirasdar, was a great devotee of the *Mahaswamiji*, as has already been stated. An image of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada was installed within the campus of the temple of Sri Subrahmanya Swami at the request of Tandavaraya Pillai and on *Krishnapaksha Ekadasi* of *Phalguna*, on which day the *Mahaswamiji* completed his fiftieth year, at the request of Thandavaraya Pillai and with the permission of the *Mahaswamiji*, the agent Sri Srikantha Shastri installed an image of the *Mahaswamiji* Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati to the right of the image of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada. The *Mahaswamiji* completed his *Chaturmasya-Sankalpa* in that place and having conferred the title of '*Bhaktaratnam'* on

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Thandavaraya Pillai, he travelled by way of Salem, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri and entered the Kolar District of Mysore state.

Many years had elapsed since the *Mahaswamiji* last visited the district of Kolar. Sri C. Srikantheswara Iyer was now the Deputy Commissioner having been a trusted lieutenant of the famous *Dewan* K. Seshadri Iyer. Srikantheswara Iyer induced the *Mahaswamiji* to remain for forty six days in his district and served him with great zeal and earned his blessings. The *Mahaswamiji* appeared to be anxious to visit the Nandi hills which he had once seen in company with his Guru. The *Mahaswamiji* was one who always liked to wander freely whenever he came to a hill or a forest. When he was on the Nandi hills, he wished to bathe in the lake known as Amritasarovar. He plunged in to the waters of the Amritasarovar, cool and inviting after the heat of the plains; he sat for a long-while, exposed to the cold wind, absorbed in meditation helped by the solitude, and the charming scenery and he returned to his camp only in the evening. The exposure brought severe cold with a pain in the chest which troubled him all the night; but by *Ishwara*'s grace, the illness passed away soon. The *Mahaswamiji* returned to Chikballapur and after resting there for some time, he left that place for Bangalore.

The construction of the Math building in Bangalore which was commenced in the year Kilaka (1907 C.E), was now complete. The *Mahaswamiji* entered the city of Bangalore, escorted by the officers of Government and the

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citizens with great pomp and came to the entrance of the Math which was a grand and imposing structure. Having sent the sacred images of Chandramoulishwara and Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada in advance into the Math, he visited the temple of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada situated outside the Math and then entered the Math building. After *Dhuli-Padapuja* and other services had been performed, the *Mahaswamiji* gave *phala* and *Mantrakshata* to all who had assembled. He then went over the building with Sri V.P. Madhava Rao, under whose auspices it had been planned and built, and he expressed his great satisfaction with the *Dewan* for his foresight and promptitude.

The Maharaja of Mysore was waiting at Bangalore to pay his respects again to the *Mahaswamiji* and at the invitation of the *Mahaswamiji*, the Maharaja and the members of his family were entertained in the newly built Math. They performed *Pada-Puja*, received *tirtha* and *Prasada* from the *Mahaswamiji* and they left for the palace with the *Mahaswamiji*'s blessings. On the *Shuklapaksha Chaturthi* of *Magha*, of the year *Sadharana*, S.S.1833 (3rd February, 1911), the *Mahaswamiji* sent for the Maharaja and a few high officials and told them that his idea in building the Math was to make it the centre of advanced Sanskrit studies and establish a Sanskrit College under the title of '*Bharatiya Girvana Praudha Vidya Abhivardhani Pathashala*' where, in course of time, provision could be made for boarding and educating, free, fifty advanced students in the Purva and the Uttara Mimamsas and that a start would soon be made with eight advanced students

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and two teacher pundits. Sri V.P. Madhava Rao, the *Dewan*, who had built a row of seven houses near the Math and fitted them up with the necessary things, now placed the block at the disposal of the Swami for the residence of the students.

The *Mahaswamiji* was greatly pleased with the offer and accepted it, conveying his blessings for the *Dewan*. The *Mahaswamiji* pointed out that though the duty of carrying out these aims really rested on the Maharaja as well as on wealthy and charitable people, the Math had resolved to devote a portion of its annual income towards the object and when good results had been shown, charitable persons might then come forward to place the institution on a permanent basis. The Maharaja and the other disciples of the *Mahaswamiji* who had assembled there expressed their gratitude to the *Mahaswamiji* for the encouragement he was giving to Sanskrit learning and took leave of the *Mahaswamiji*.

The *Mahaswamiji* remained in Bangalore for thirteen days and then set out for Sringeri. Travelling by rapid marches, he arrived at Malekal. While camping at Malekal, news came that the new building in the course of construction for Sharadamba at Sringeri had caught fire accidentally; the stone pillars were broken down and there was great loss, though the image of Sharadamba which was housed in an adjoining wooden *Mantapa* (enclosure) was intact. The agent and others were greatly perturbed at the news, but the *Mahaswamiji*'s only feeling was that the fire

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had not the power to touch the image.

The *Mahaswamiji* resumed his journey and travelling through Jarikere, Shimoga and Tirthahalli, reached Sringeri at about 9 o'clock on the morning of *Krishnapaksha Dwitiya* of *Phalguna* of the year *Sadharana* (March 1911). He went round the four streets of Sringeri in *Pradakshina*, entered the temple of Sharada, paid his adorations to the deity and praised her greatness in the following extempore stanza:

प्रोक्तं केनागमान्ते किमु परममहःसन्निधौ स्वस्वकार्या–
शक्ता देवा बभूवुः शुचिपवनमुखा इत्युमुं मुख्यमर्थम् ।
जानन्त्वात्माद्वितीयम्रा इति विधिरमणी दारुगेहे स्थितासी-
ज्ज्वालामालाकुलेऽस्मिन्सुमवसनयुता दाहगन्धेन शून्या ॥

(Has it not been said in the *Kena Upanishad* that the gods, Agni, Vayu and others were unable to exercise their power in the presence of the great Light (*Brahman*)? It is no wonder then, that You (Sharadamba) stood unscathed with garland and dress intact, in the wooden shrine, though surrounded by flames all round to teach Your disciples this great truth.)

He then visited the *Adhishthanam* (temple) of his Guru and entering into to the temple of Sri Vidyashankara, he prostrated himself before him. He then accepted the *Dhuli-Padapuja* offered by the people and leaving all the paraphernalia of the Math, left for the Narasimhavana, his favourite woods nearby, on the other side of the Tunga with a small number of followers and resumed his quiet,

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meditative life there. He was now in his elements, after four years of unremitting camp life, visits of an unceasing flow of devotees, lectures and public discourses. He felt like one who had been incarcerated in the jail and unexpectedly restored to freedom. Only his constant and devoted attendants, Sri Srikantha Shastri and *Dharmadhikari* Kunigal Rama Shastri (alias Krishna Shastri) could gauge the depth of the *Mahaswamiji*'s feeling now and the peace that came to the mahatma in his favourite and charming retreat.

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10. Videhamukti

The *Mahaswamiji* deputed Sri Kunigal Rama Shastri, Dharmadhikari, to Bangalore to inaugurate the Sanskrit College there on the auspicious day of *Shankara-Jayanti*, V*aishakha shukla panchami*. The Shastri accordingly went to Bangalore and the College was opened under the presidency of Sri P.N. Krishnamurthi, Sri V.P. Madhava Rao and a few high officials of the State being present. The College opened with eight students for the advanced studies in *Purva* and *Uttara Mimamsa*; each student was given a stipend of Rs.20/- a month and free quarters. Two teachers selected by the *Mahaswamiji* from the pundits of the Math were appointed as professors; the course of studies embraced a period of eight years[1].

Ever since his return from the Kalady tour, the Swami was suffering from bronchial trouble during the cold season. On the *Shuklapaksha Saptami* of *Magha* in

[1] It may be incidentally mentioned here that of the first batch of eight students, seven came out successful in the final examination, held under the auspices of Jagadguru Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati *Mahaswamiji,* with the help of eminent pundits during the *Navaratri* festival in the year *Siddharthi* (1919) and were awarded the title of *Pandita-pravara* and received shawls and gold chains and certificates in recognition of their proficiency. Three of them became Pundits in the Sringeri Math; one became a professor in the Sanskrit College, Mylapore; one a teacher in the Sanskrit school at Puducode, established by the late Justice P.R. Sundara Iyer, one a Pundit in the Government Library Mysore; and the seventh a teacher in a Sanskrit Patashala, established at Chittoor, Cochin State, by Sri Dharmasila Krishna Iyer.

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Virodhikrit (Friday, 26th January, 1912) the *Mahaswamiji* showed symptoms of coughing. It appeared as though the ailment now was no worse than in the previous years. But the cough began to increase. The ailment, instead of lessening with time, began to give him more and more trouble. There were other things also to disturb his mind.

The heterodox habits of life, against which he had been fighting abroad, now invaded the very Agrahara of Sringeri. Morning ablutions and prayers, the old simple ways, *Vedic* studies and observances, were all slowly getting neglected. The Swami felt that his efforts to restore the old usages were failing in their purpose; he had created the shrine of the great teacher and had surrendered his further responsibilities to a higher spiritual being. He could do nothing more. A stanza out of the hymn he composed at this period shows what he was feeling:

किं पाठयेयं लघुचन्द्रिकां वा किं वा त्यजेयं सकलप्रपञ्चम् ।
स्वप्नेऽद्य मे ब्रूहि किमत्र कार्यं डोलायितं मामकमम्ब चेतः ॥

(Should I teach the *Laghucandrika* (an advanced *Advaitic* text) or should I give up everything? My mind is confused. Mother, tell me today in a dream what I should do.)

One thing remained to be done; a successor to the *Peetham* had to be appointed before he could quit the body. For several years past, he had his eye on a promising youth at Sringeri. The sole surviving son out of thirteen children of his parents, the boy was very intelligent and well-

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behaved; he had passed out of the elementary school and was a student of the Sirkar English School established at Sringeri, when he came under the notice of Sri Srikantha Shastri, the keen-eyed agent of the Math. The agent reported the matter to the *Mahaswamiji*, as his habit was; the master had said that such promising boys should be made to study Sanskrit and be brought up in *vaidika* ways.

The boy was accordingly transferred to the Sanskrit School at Sringeri, which was maintained by the Math. He came of a learned family, his grand-father having been an eminent *Vyakarana* (grammar) Pundit, who was living a quiet, simple and pious life in the north and who had been brought and entertained by the previous *Mahaswamiji* as a Pundit of the Math. The *Mahaswamiji* used to visit the Sanskrit school at Sringeri once a year and examine the boys himself and encourage the deserving among them. On one such occasion, the *Mahaswamiji* marked the smartness, the prompt replies and the modest deportment of this lad, gave him presents and asked the agent to have his particular eye on him and have him trained in Logic and other higher Sanskrit studies. The boy's name was Narasimha *Shastri*.

That the *Mahaswamiji* was keeping this lad steadily in his mind, with an eye to his nomination to the *Peetham* in due time is seen from a poem, in which the burden was:

सर्वज्ञं श्रीनृसिंहं कुरु शिवदयिते सत्वरं मद्विनम्रम् ।

(O beloved of Shiva, quickly make Nrisimha, a pupil devoted to me, omniscient.)

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All these had happened before the *Mahaswamiji* started on his Kalady tour. After his return to Sringeri, he examined the youth and found that he had made great progress in his *Tarka* studies, that he was scrupulously observing the disciplines of *Brahmacharya* - the early ablutions and prayers and the daily homage to the sanctified fire. The *Mahaswamiji* then sent the youth to the Math's College at Bangalore *Bharatiya Girvana-Praudha-Vidya-abhivardhini Pathashala* to study *Purva-Mimamsa*, as a preliminary to the study of *Vedanta*.

Taking into consideration of his own deteriorating health in early 1912, the *Mahaswamiji* wished to carry out the decision that he had arrived at a few years back. The *Mahaswamiji* had already decided that Sri Narasimha *Shastri* was the most eligible candidate to ascend the Peetham and wished to confer *Sannyasa* on him immediately. He sent Kunigal Rama Shastri to Mysore to acquaint the Maharaja with his wishes and to introduce Sri Narasimha Shastri to His Highness. Rama Shastri accordingly went to Bangalore and learning that the Maharaja was there, presented himself before His Highness and acquainted him with the *Mahaswamiji*'s wishes. The Maharaja was grieved to hear the *Mahaswamiji*'s ill-health and expressed his readiness to act in accordance with the *Mahaswamiji*'s wishes in every respect.

Meanwhile the end was drawing near. On the full moon day of *Phalguna* (Sunday 3rd March, 1912), when the *Mahaswamiji* bathed in the Tunga River and the cold

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plunge brought on a rheumatic attack, the *Mahaswamiji* was unable to walk erect.

Just at this time, Dr. P.S. Achyuta Rao, a senior surgeon from Mysore came to Sringeri in the course of his tours. Dr. Achyuta Rao had great regard and love for the *Mahaswamiji*. Moreover, he had already known the physical constitution of the *Mahaswamiji*, having attended him on some previous occasions of illness. He treated the *Mahaswamiji* for two or three days and *Mahaswamiji*'s health improved; but the cough did not leave him. Dr. Achyuta Rao gave some hints of the serious nature of the illness. Before he left Sringeri on the night of the *Trayodashi* of *Krishnapaksha* of *Phalguna* (Saturday, 16th March, 1912), when the *Mahaswamiji* retired for the day, the cough started to trouble him at 10 o'clock and continued till 1 o'clock.

On the next day, the urgency to adopt a disciple and successor in accordance with the *Mahaswamiji*'s intention was felt. The *Mahaswamiji* gave instructions to the agent to write to Kunigal Rama Shastri that he should acquaint the Maharaja immediately with the facts and bring to Narasimha Shastri from Bangalore, where he was studying the *Shastras*. A letter was accordingly written to Kunigal Rama Shastri explaining fully the conditions of the *Mahaswamiji*'s bodily health and dispatched by means of a messenger.

On the new moon day of *Phalguna* (Monday 18th March, 1912) the agent who was in a conversation with the

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Mahaswamiji, suggested that though a message had been sent to *Dharmadhikari* Rama Shastri to fetch Narasimha Shastri urgently, still it would take three days for the *Dharmadhikari* to return. Would it not be better that a successor should be nominated at once, from among the suitable candidates at Sringeri itself? The *Mahaswamiji* inquired whether there was any one worthy of being selected for the place. The names of three persons were suggested. One of them was rejected as not being likely to become very learned; another was discarded as not up to the mark in character, with the observation that it was better to leave the holy seat of Sringeri unfilled than to appoint such a successor. The third was passed over in silence. The *Mahaswamiji* finally said, "Kunigal Rama Shastri will bring Narasimha Shastri. Is it not? Well then, let him come." He then commanded the agent to recite his favourable poem of *Atma-vidya-vilasa* and enjoyed the bliss of the contemplation of *Atman*.

On the morning of the *Shuklapaksha Prathama* of *Paridhavi* (Tuesday, 19th March, 1912), the *Mahaswamiji*, while seated in meditation after his morning bath, appeared to have fallen into a trance; this somewhat frightened the attendants who ran to the agent who was performing the worship of Chandramoulishwara and informed him of it. He left the *Puja* in the midst, went to the presence of the *Mahaswamiji* and saw him. As he had often seen the *Mahaswamiji* in such a state of trance, he was not frightened and took his seat close by in silence. After half an hour the *Mahaswamiji* returned to external

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consciousness and asked, "Is your *Puja* over?" On being told of all that had transpired the *Mahaswamiji* observed, "These people have unnecessarily disturbed you. As my body was greatly in pain, I engaged my mind in the ecstatic bliss of the *Atman* to the point of forgetting all about the body. These people have disturbed you under their mistaken notion."

All that day, it seemed as though the *Mahaswamiji* was in great suffering. He bathed and performed his ceremonies but took no food. He spoke very little with others. When visitors came, he merely lifted his head and answered only by a smile.

On the next day, the *Dvitiya* of *Shuklapaksha* of *Chaitra* (Wednesday, 20th March, 1912), the *Mahaswamiji* had his bath at six o'clock in the morning. He then took a little milk after much entreaty of the agent and sat down. In about a quarter of an hour, he forgot all about the body and passed into deep meditation. The visitors who kept coming from about seven o'clock in the morning fancied that as the *Mahaswamiji* had had no sleep on the previous night he might be taking a little rest and were talking among themselves saying that the *Mahaswamiji*'s condition was better than the previous day. The *Mahaswamiji* continued to enjoy the bliss of the contemplation of *Atman* till quarter past nine. Then came a violent fit of coughing which lasted for an hour without intermission.

When it ceased, it was followed by tremors in the legs and arms. This suffering ceased at about eleven o'clock. The

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Mahaswamiji appeared greatly fatigued. With the head bent down, he sat motionless in his *Padmasana* (a yogic posture). Exactly at thirty minutes past eleven o'clock, his soul merged into the all pervading Supreme Brahman, leaving behind the bright smile alone which as before, was irradiating his face. The attendants who were near, saw his body lean back and lifted it and laid it on the ground. Such was the manner of the passing of this great *yogi*. No one was bold enough to say it was death. After half an hour, all came to the conclusion that the great *Mahaswamiji* had obtained *Videhamukti*, disembodied liberation.

The news of the *videhamukti* of the *Mahaswamiji* who knew no enemy among all mankind, who was so full of tenderness towards all living beings, who had the power of allaying the sorrows of men by a single look caused intolerable grief in all those that knew him. The *Mahaswamiji* had given orders while living that his body should be interred in his favourite retreat, Narasimhavana, and that the *narmada-banalinga* which he had been worshipping every day before he retired for the night should be installed over the spot. This was accordingly done.

The disciples who had gathered to pay their respects at the *Mahaswamiji*'s *Adhishthana* (shrine) resolved to erect a shrine of granite slabs over the spot of interment and entrusted the responsibility to the agent. Rupees thirty thousand were soon collected for the purpose. A celebrated sculptor of Bombay, Mr. Ganapati Krishna Rao Mathre, was

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now fortunately at Mysore. The agent requested the artist to prepare the statue of the late *Mahaswamiji*, which he gladly undertook in the belief that his artistic skill could be put to no nobler use. Ramaswami Chettiar, son of Chidambaram Chettiar of Kanadukattan, who was now completing the shrine of Sharadamba at Sringeri, undertook to erect a granite shrine over the late *Mahaswamiji*'s monument.

When both the shrines had been completed, the new Jagadguru, Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati *Mahaswamiji (Sri Sri Sannidhanam)* wished to perform the *Kumbhabhishekam (*consecration) ceremony of these temples together and thereby fulfill the intentions both of the *Mahaswamiji* and of his disciples. The fact of the temples having been completed and *Sri Sri Sannidhanam's* eagerness to perform the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremony was made known to the Maharaja and the Maharaja was invited to Sringeri on the occasion. It was decided that the *Kumbhabhishekam ceremony* would be performed on Thursday, the *Krishnapaksha* Prathama of *Vaishakha*, of the year *Nala*, S.S. 1839, (1916 C.E.) and letters of invitation were issued to all the disciples of the Sringeri Math throughout India. Priests were appointed to perform the various rituals connected with the *Kumbhabhishekha* ceremony that commenced seven days prior to the consecration.

A large number of disciples came to Sringeri to witness the ceremony and to pay their respects to *Sri Sri*

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Sannidhanam. His Highness, the Maharaja, came there with a small retinue. At 8 o'clock on the morning of the appointed day, *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* came to the temple built over the *Adhishthanam* of his great and revered Guru in Narasimhavana. His Highness, the Maharaja of Mysore, and the other guests also came there. The statue of the *Mahaswamiji* was installed in the temple, the *kumbhabhisheka*, *pranapratishta* and other ceremonies were preformed. At ten o'clock on the same morning, the *Kumbhabhishekha* and *pranapratishta* ceremonies were performed in the temple of Sri Sharadamba and *Prasada* was bestowed on the Maharaja as well as other disciples.

In the night, a public procession of Goddess Sharadamba in *Ratha* (chariot) was conducted with *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* seated in a palanquin. This gave great satisfaction to all the disciples who had gathered there. The people's thoughts went back to the *agadguru* Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*. They praised his great virtues and now beholding *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* (*Jagadguru* Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Swamiji) installed as his successor, they rejoiced exceedingly and the sorrow they felt at the *Mahaswamiji*'s passing away was overcome to some extent.

On the next morning, the Maharaja came to Narasimhavana and having first worshipped the image of the *Mahaswamiji*, he performed *Pada-Puja* to *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* and received *tirtha* and *Prasada* from him.

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The Maharaja took leave of *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* and left Sringeri for Mysore on Saturday, the *Krishnapaksha tritiya* of *Vaishakha*.

On the afternoon of the same day, *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* convened an assembly of learned men in the temple of Sri Sharadamba and in his sweet, inimitable style, propounded briefly the life of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada and explained why Sringeri was chosen as the appropriate place for the founding of the Sharada Temple, how significant the dedicated contribution of his Guru – the *Mahaswamiji,* in renovating the temple was and what the duty of the disciples should be as regards the temple. Gifts of shawls and valuable cloths were then distributed among the Vidwans. The Gaekwad of Baroda had sent a representative on this occasion, who presented *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* with valuable gifts of cloths and jewels; *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* accepted the same and sent his blessings to the Gaekwad, with *Prasadas*.

Many of the most prominent among the disciples who had assembled in Sringeri, held a meeting on the afternoon of the same day of the *Kumbhabhisheka* ceremony, in the temple of the *Mahaswamiji* in Narasimhavana, and passed resolutions showing their appreciations of the *Mahaswamiji*'s greatness and virtues and stating that in order to show their gratitude to the *Mahaswamiji*, permanent arrangements should be made for the observance of the *Jayanti* (birth anniversary) of the *Mahaswamiji* on the eleventh day of the dark half of

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Phalguna, as well as the day of the his passing away, on the *Shuklapaksha Dvitiya* of *Chaitra*. It was resolved that for the purpose, a sum of fifty thousand rupees should be collected and the interest thereon utilized for these purposes. Accordingly, a subscription list was opened and a sum of twenty thousand rupees was subscribed on the spot. This was reported to *Sri Sri Sannidhanam* and was approved by him. The visitors to Sringeri having thus shown their devotion and having obtained *Prasada* from the Jagadguru *Sri Sri Sannidhanam*, departed to their homes.

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11. Greatness of the Jagadguru

The love and compassion of this great *yogi*, Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati *Mahaswamiji*, was universal. He could not tolerate the sight of any one suffering in his presence. Even while walking, he took great care to avoid treading upon worms or insects. When he met people in distress and when they gave vent to their sorrows, the change in his countenance was such that it seemed as though he took up the burden of their sorrows and endured them. Not a day passed without his making inquiries whether the people around him had taken their food. If it came to his knowledge that someone could not get food, no matter how inconvenient the hour might be, he would insist on seeing that the person was fed. When *sannyasins*, old men or men afflicted with disease came to Sringeri to have his Darshan, he would ascertain for himself the arrangements made for their lodgings and meals; if he found any lapses, he would quietly arrange to rectify them without blaming any one.

The equanimity of the mind of the *Mahaswamiji* was extraordinary. He never differentiated people on the basis of religion, caste, age or worldly status. His conduct reminds us of that of Bhagavan. The Lord says:

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समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि मे तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

(I am the same towards all living beings. To Me, there is none detestable or none dear. But those worship Me with devotion, they exist in Me, and I too exist in them.)

Such indeed would be the trait of those who have treaded the path of the philosophy of non-duality and realized their identity with the Supreme God. With *pundits*, *Yogi*s and *Jnanis*, he would discuss for hours on end the subtlest issues of philosophy and practice; with little children, he would himself become one among them delighting in their ingenious prattle and pleasing them with fruits and things they valued most.

The *Mahaswamiji*'s devotion to God was exemplary, in accordance with the teaching of the *Bhagavadgita,* which says;

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

(An ordinary person does whatsoever a great man does; whatever the great man upholds as authority, the world follows that.)

The *Mahaswamiji* sought God through love and found Him. When he was barely two years old, he used to dance before the deity his father was worshipping, his tiny hands beating time to the music of his lisping words, out of child-love for all that is pure and holy; and when he grew up to

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manhood, it was the same love that threw him into the rapturous joy of fervent devotion.

He saw no difference among the deities Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. He was intensely earnest in his *Bhakti*. His method of performing *Puja* was a sight to see. None could hurry him in his *Puja*. He may have some one hundred idols before him. Each idol must be separately worshipped. Each must have its allotted Gandha, *Akshata*, *kumkuma*, and flower. Each must be praised. Each must be meditated upon. Of course, Sri Chandramoulishvara and Sri Sharadamba occupied the foremost place in his mind. He would never think of them as images but would feel their living presence. He would repeat *Stotras* with all the enthusiasm of a devotee. Hundreds of hymns in Sanskrit flowed from his lips as spontaneous outpourings of praise of and prayers to the deities he worshipped; the collection of his works came to be known as '*Bhaktisudhatarangini*'. No wonder, it seemed to the beholder of the Mahaswamiji's *Puja* as though the deity that he was worshipping came and stood before him and conversed with him.

To say that such a great *Jnani* and *Yogi* possessed *anima* (a power with which one can become as small as an atom) and other *Yoga-Siddhis*, is not surprising in the least. Many people came to him desiring to be blessed with children or to be cured of diseases. It is well known that the *Mahaswamiji* never employed any means other than giving the sufferers *Bhasma* (sacred ash) or *tirtha* (holy water) or rarely, talismans or *Upadesha* (initiation). The method he

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adopted may have been different, but the result was the same – the suffering of the disciple was alleviated and their minds were suffused with bliss. Sometimes, the very *Darshan* of the *Mahaswamiji* was sufficient for the suffering of the devotees to disappear.

The *Mahaswamiji*'s devotion to his Guru was remarkable. He would talk for days together about the greatness of his Guru. All his talk, all his deeds, in short everything of his, he would dedicate to his Guru. His Guru was ever a living presence to him. He would consult him on each and every occasion. Without his express permission, he would never do anything. He would be never tired of worshipping his Guru. He was an incarnation of faith. His belief in the *Vedas*, *Smritis* and *Puranas* was unshakeable. His respect for those who observed a *Dharmic* life was overflowing.

The *Mahaswamiji*'s detachment to the world was impeccable. He never desired anything for himself. Even amidst activities that required his active involvement, he never felt that he was the doer. An enlightened *yogi*, the *Mahaswamiji* often forgot his physical body and spent hours in *Samadhi*, absorbed in Brahman. The highest *Upanishadic* truths, he would expound in an easily understandable style. The most knotty philosophical points, he would unravel in a marvelously easy way. Indeed, it is only possible for those who have realized the *Atman* and not those who possess bookish knowledge, to make known the truth of truths get into even untrained minds.

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The *Mahaswamiji* had a great regard for the famous *Jivanmukta*, Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra, who lived in the eighteenth century (C.E.) in Southern India. The *Mahaswamiji* was never tired of reciting or listening to *Atma-vidya-vilasa*, the outpouring in poetic form of Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra on the bliss of the knowledge of the *Atman*. Oftentimes, when seated among his pupils, he used to ask one of his students to sing the verses of this poem. The *Mahaswamiji* would have passed into *Samadhi on the Atman* and become oblivious of his body and surroundings, within minutes after the commencement of the recitation.

Thanks to his excellent administration, the resources of the Math increased manifold and the money collected was spent on noble causes. The debts that had gone on accumulating for long were all paid up in the *Mahaswamiji*'s lifetime. The ancient and dilapidated buildings of the Math were rebuilt according to contemporary designs to provide greater convenience for public. The temple of Sri Sharada was originally built mostly of wood and, only to a very limited extent, of stone. During the time of the *Mahaswamiji*, it was wholly built up of stone structure. The *Mahaswamiji* earmarked sufficient funds for the spread of Sanskrit education; two Sanskrit Colleges were established. Monthly and annual grants were given to certain private institutions as well as scholarships to deserving students of all communities. It would be no exaggeration to say that that the *Mahaswamiji*'s reign was a golden era in the history of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

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Hundreds of foreigners, educated men of alien faiths, came to have a sight of him and returned carrying with them the conviction that they had seen and conversed with an exceptionally great soul. Mr. Fraser, who was tutor to the Maharaja of Mysore, once remarked that in his own country and elsewhere visitors were treated to tea and the other things, while the Swami gave to his guests out of the fullness of his heart and they departed from his presence with the sense of their souls having been lifted-up above life's turmoil.

Pomp and splendour did not influence him in any way. He lived in the midst of luxury, with hundreds of attendants to minister to his personal comforts; the income of a rich *Jagir* at his entire disposal, princes laying their wealth and influence at his feet; but he stood aloof from all; his soul dwelt apart; he lived a simple life, an abstemious life, with not a thought for the riches that flowed to him unsolicited, absorbed in his praises of God, in his *Vedantic* studies and discourses; and if he emerged out of these, it was only to relieve the distress of those he saw around him, only to raise his fellow-beings from the depths of spiritual degradation into which they had fallen.

The *Mahaswamiji* is often referred to as "*Abhinava Shankara*" (Shankara reincarnated) as his life had several parallels to the life of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada. There were several similarities between him and the first great master, Shankara Bhagavatpada. Both were born of their parents' *tapas*; both lost their father in early childhood; both

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became *sannyasins* before they were eight years old; both preached *Vaidika Dharma*. Shankara Bhagavatpada put-down the immoral practices which people were following in the name of religion; the *Mahaswamiji* substituted observances in the temples that were founded in his day, with *Vedic* methods. From the example of the *Mahaswamiji*, we can understand how Shankara Bhagavatpada could have combined in himself both veneration for the various concrete symbols of Godhead and impersonal contemplation in the ecstasy of ultra-cosmic consciousness – how the two may be useful each in a particular stage of spiritual advancement but that both may co-exist, though in different moods. For the rest, the *Mahaswamiji* was content to walk humbly in the footsteps of the Great Master Shankara Bhagavatpada, whom he worshipped as God-incarnate on earth, to establish righteousness and whose image, he set-up at Kalady, his birth-place. He was a realised soul, a master of the *Shastras*, a benign Guru, an accomplished Yogi, a magnetic personality and an excellent poet. Indeed, the *Mahaswamiji* was a sage par excellence.

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I. Gurudvaya–Abheda–Anusandhanam

(Composed by the present Acharya, Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji, during the centenary year of the rediscovery of Sri Adi Shankaracharya's Janmabhoomi kshetram at Kalady).

आर्याम्बाशिवगुर्वोश्च लक्ष्म्यम्बारामशास्त्रिणोः।
पुत्रत्वेनावतीर्णो यो धर्मसंरक्षणाय वै ॥ १ ॥

The Jagadguru who incarnated, for protecting Dharma, as the son of Aryamba and Shivaguru (in the form of Adi Shankara) and as the son of Lakshmamma and Rama Shastri (the Mahaswamiji)

अष्टमे हायने यश्च तुर्यमाश्रममग्रहीत्।
प्रस्थानत्रयभाष्यादेर्लेखको द्योतकश्च यः ॥ २ ॥

He who took to Sannyasa at the age of 8 (both Adi Shankaracharya and the Mahaswamiji). He who wrote many works including the commentaries on the Prasthana Traya (Adi Shankaracharya) and He who revealed them all (the Mahaswamiji by getting them published)

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श्रृङ्गेर्यां शारदापीठं स्थापयामास यो महान् ।
अध्यतिष्ठच्च तत्पीठं लोकानुद्धर्तुमेव यः ॥ ३ ॥

He, the great One, who established the Sharada Peetham at Sringeri (Adi Shankaracharya). He, who adorned the same Peetham, for uplifting the masses (the Mahaswamiji).

कालट्यां यो जनिं लेभे यश्च तामुद्दधार ह ।
श्रृङ्गेर्यां शारदां यश्च स्थापयामास सद्गुरुः ॥ ४ ॥

He who took birth at Kalady (Adi Shankaracharya) and rediscovered it (the Mahaswamiji). He who consecrated Goddess Sharada at Sringeri (Adi Shankaracharya).

तामेव कालटीक्षेत्रे यः पुनः प्रत्यतिष्ठिपत् ।
शङ्करः सच्चिदानन्दशिवाभिनवपूर्वकः ॥ ५ ॥
नृसिंहभारती चेति नामद्वयविराजितम् ।
जगद्गुरुमहं वन्दे लोकानुग्रहदीक्षितम् ॥ ६ ॥

He who consecrated Goddess Sharada at Kalady (the Mahaswamiji). I prostrate to that Jagadguru who has taken a vow to bestow His Blessings to the world, and who revels in 2 names - Adi Shankaracharya and Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati.

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II. Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimhabhaarati Ashthakam

(Composed by the present Acharya, Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji)

पिङ्गलाभिधानहायने गृहीतजन्मनः
सर्वमङ्गलासहायपादसेवने रतान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरूत्तमान्
भावयामि भक्तिपूर्णचेतसा निरन्तरम् ॥ १ ॥

With a heart full of devotion, 1 constantly contemplate on the supreme Preceptor, Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who took birth in the year Pingala (1858) and who revels in the worship of Lord Shiva, the consort of Goddess Sarvamangala.

श्रीनृसिंहगुरुपदाब्जबम्भरायितान्तरान्
श्रीसदाशिवेन्द्रयोगितुल्यसिद्धिसंयुतान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीयतीश्वरान्
भावयामि भुक्तिमुक्तिदायिनो नतालये ॥ २ ॥

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I contemplate on the foremost ascetic, Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who grants both worldly enjoyment and liberation from samsara, who is like a honeybee hovering over the lotus feet of His Guru Sri Nrsimha Bharati, and whose accomplishments paralleled those of Mahayogi Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra.

धर्मतत्वबोधकानधर्मनिग्रहे रतान्
शर्मदानतत्परानशेषभक्तकोटये ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरूत्तमान्
शीलयामि सन्ततं शिवेतरापनुत्तये ॥ ३ ॥

I meditate on this great Guru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who revels in teaching the tenets of Sanatana Dharma and in curbing Adharma, and who is interested in granting bliss to the multitudes of His devotees.

स्वीयपादपांसुपावितास्खिलक्षमातलान्
स्वप्रकाशचिन्निविष्टमानसाननारतम् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीजगद्गुरून्
सादरं नमामि सर्वलोकरक्षणव्रतान् ॥ ४ ॥

1 salute with humility the world-Preceptor Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who has vowed to protect all the worlds, who sanctified the entire land

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by the dust under His feet, and whose mind always abides in the self-luminous Consciousness.

वेदशास्त्रसंप्रदायपालने धृतव्रतान्
विद्वदालिगीयमानपाण्डितीविभूषितान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरूत्तमान्
चिन्तयामि शिष्यहृत्तमोविवस्वतोऽनिशम् ॥ ५ ॥

I meditate upon the supreme Preceptor Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, who is the Sun to the darkness (of ignorance) in the hearts of His disciples, who is the avowed protector of the scriptures and traditions, and who shone with scholarliness praised by the highly learned.

दम्भदर्पवर्जितानशेषलोकवन्दितान्
कुम्भजन्मनस्समस्तवेदशास्त्रवारिधेः ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीयतीश्वरान्
संस्मरामि संयमीन्द्रसेव्यपादपङ्कजान् ॥ ६ ॥

I recollect in the mind the supreme ascetic Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, whose lotus feet are worshipped by great yogis, who is devoid of all pride and conceit, who is revered by the whole world and who was like Agastya to the ocean of Vedas and Shastras (i.e. has drunk up the ocean of the Vedas and Shastras as Sage Agastya drank up the ocean).

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भूमिपालवन्दितानपूर्ववाग्झरीयुतान्
कामितेष्टदायकान् प्रपन्नलोकपङ्कये ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरूत्तमान्
भावयामि भद्रपूगदायिदिव्यवीक्षणान् ॥ ७ ॥

I contemplate on the supreme Guru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati, whose glances are capable of bestowing auspiciousness and welfare, who is worshipped by kings, who has an unparalleled flow of speech and who fulfills all desires of those who worship Him.

शारदाशशाङ्कमौलिविघ्नराजपूजकान्
शारदेन्दुतुल्यकीर्तिशालिनश्शिवङ्करान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीजगद्गुरून्
शीलयामि शान्तिदान्तिमुख्यसम्पदाप्तये ॥ ८ ॥

For acquiring the qualities essential for spiritual progress like control of the mind and senses, I meditate on the world-Preceptor, Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati who worships Goddess Sri Sharadamba, Lord Chandramoulishwara and Lord Ganesha, whose fame is like the lustre of the clear autumnal full moon and who grants all auspiciousness and prosperity.

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